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ADVENTURES

OF

AN OFFICER

IN THE

SERVICE OF RUNJEET SINGH.

196633

BY

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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DEDICATION.

TO HER

WHO BEST DESERVES

ANY OFFERING THAT CAN BE MADE

BY

HER SON.

PREFACE.

The writer of the following pages, having passed a great part of his life in India, and witnessed many of the most stirring scenes and events of the last twenty years, the history and politics of the country have long been his favourite study and recreation—a labour of love, to which he has ever returned with fresh interest, after having been called from the pursuit by less congenial avocations. The result of these tastes and habits is the following work.

The *form* which the materials have taken—that of an imaginary autobiography—may perhaps be thought to require a few words, with a

view to enabling the reader to distinguish between the facts that are placed before him, and the fiction.

In the first place, then, all the characters in the Narrative which bear the names of known persons, are offered as portraits of those persons, so far as the Author's powers and materials have enabled him to paint them. Many of the incidents in which they are made to figure are also real, though they may not have occurred exactly at the times and places assigned to them.

Many of the conversations with Runjīt Singh's confidential adviser, Azīzudīn, also took place.

On the other hand, Bellasis himself, and the Personal Adventures ascribed to him, are purely fictitious,—the slight story having been adopted merely as a convenient vehicle for conveying to the reader characteristic illustrations of the border country, its people, its manners, its rulers, and their modes of ruling.

It is only fair to the memory of an extraordinary, and in many respects, a distinguished

man to add, that what is put into the mouth of the Māharājah himself, Runjīt Singh, is for the most part imaginary.

In detailing the plans and endeavours of Bellasis for the good of the people he was appointed to govern, the Author desired to sketch what he knows to have been attempted, in another quarter, for a people as wild and impracticable as those of Kōt Kāngrā.

Finally, the character of Bellasis himself was suggested to the Author by his intercourse with some of the foreign officers in Runjīt's service, though he is not intended to represent any *one* of them.

With regard to the Historical passages of the work, they are chiefly taken from Forster, Malcolm, Prinsep, and Burnes, to whom, jointly and severally, the Author gladly acknowledges how largely he is indebted. Some incidents, however, rest on native authority.

The notes were made under circumstances affording peculiar opportunity for observation.

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ADVENTURES OF AN OFFICER.

CHAPTER I.

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Who was my father, or who my mother, signifies little: enough that, after some stirring experiences in other quarters of the world, I found myself, on the 5th of May, 1830, a colonel in the service of Māharājah[1] Runjīt Singh. My rise was sudden, and my military experience, perhaps, scarcely entitled me to command many a man old enough to be my father; but, with the

1 Māharājah, great prince.

Māharājah, as with more civilized monarchs, rank did not go by proved merit.

It matters not a straw to my readers who or what I am; but I will let them into one secret—that I am not what I call myself. If, for personal or family reasons, I adopt a "nom de guerre," what is that to the world? And, if all my facts are not found to be sober realities, take my word for it they have a deeper foundation in truth than the narratives of most travellers. With this brief preface, I beg the reader to know me as Colonel Bellasis, a gentleman travelling for recreation and excitement, but not above taking service, should a favourable opening offer; one, who, however adverse his fortunes may have been, feels that Nature intended him for something, and who sees no reason, after George Thomas[1] made for himself a principality, and Peron de Boigne and others rode over princes, why a nook in the temple of Fame should not be accessible to him; or why, while

[1] Whoever feels interested in stirring action, and in tracing what may be done by a rude, uneducated, and even dissipated man, ought to read Franklin's life of George Thomas; which, awkwardly as it is written, had strong attractions for me in my boyish days. Peron de Boigne, and some other French adventurers, were superior men, and only wanted a favourable combination of circumstances, such as we found, to have anticipated Britons in a Delhi empire.

ready to take his chance in the roughest sea, some rude but friendly blast should not lodge him in a haven. To win such fortune, I bore about one of the most powerful talismans, for I was reckless of chance, and no misgiving or calculation ever withheld me from seizing what seemed a favourable juncture. To aspire was my nature, and I was ready to perish rather than fall.

When my narrative commences, I was a tall, erect figure, standing six feet in my shoes; and, if I wanted beard and moustache to win me favour with the Sikhs, still I had broad shoulders, a slender waist, and a dauntless air. I, moreover, could use a sword and manage a horse with any man: these were natural tastes, cultivated as qualifications for the course in which I delighted to pass my days.

Where I had been born and educated I mean to keep to myself; I have not been a soldier of fortune without learning that least said is soonest mended. Among Orientals, secresy and gravity are the prime elements of wisdom; nor is a dash of mystery without its interest all over the world.

On entering the Punjāb, I introduced myself as a "Wilāyati,"[1] a word of pretty wide signifi-

[1] *Wilāyat*, a foreign land; *Wilāyati*, a foreigner; most commonly applied to a European.

cation, especially among a people who are not very nice geographers. Aware of the consequence of a first impression, I made my entrée at Lāhor, mounted on an excellent horse, whose every nerve and fibre were of iron; defying all other control, he was gentle as a lamb in my hands, obeying the slightest monition of voice or limb. Chāndā had been my companion in many an hour of labour and peril, and had stood my friend in many a time of need. After the rough, simple habits we had been used to, my steed must have felt almost as much surprised as myself at his own gay saddle-cloth, and the rich mantle that I had thrown round me, though it was one of the hottest months in the year.

My suite was small, but complete: each of my attendants was mounted on a stout *yābū*;[1] five horsekeepers ran by our side, and all bore the air of ease, good care, and plenty. Our arms were plain, but all, especially my own, well finished and handy.

Such was the impression caused by our appearance, that, as we entered Lāhor by the Taksāl[2] gateway, we were greeted with many a "*shābāsh!*" "*wāh! Faringī!*" "*changā ghoda!*" "*khūb jewān!*"[3]

[1] A pony, a galloway. [2] Taksāl, the mint.

[3] "Well done!" "Hurra! Frank!" "Fine horse!" "Smart fellow!"

My way,[1] or rather the loss of my way, led me through the whole town; for, though I had inquired what entrance conducted most directly to the suburb I was bound for, no one that I asked seemed to know. Indeed, throughout the Punjāb, there is this ignorance or apathy as to the route to be pursued: no one appears acquainted with the direct road, if that term be applicable to the pathways that intersect the country; and the loss of an hour in finding one's way in a single march seems a matter of no account.

The entrance of the town from the north-west is picturesque and pleasing; even at the commencement of the hot season, there was a green hue about the banks of the Rāvī, contrasting strongly with the huge town in its immediate vicinity. Within the city there is little that is novel to those who have sojourned in the East; but, with all its pomp and wealth, and it has both, there is a mushroom aspect about it, bespeaking

1 Cavalry guides are proverbially bad in India; but let no one who loves his peace, and prefers his own bed to a village *chārpaī*, trust himself to the tender mercies of a Sikh *sowār*:* for where it is possible to go wrong, he will be sure not to go right.

* Horseman, or rather *rider;* for it is applied to a camel-rider, or "*sūtar-sowār.*"

rather the entrenched camp, than the city built for duration. In fact, it is only the second halting-place of the Sikh hordes who have overrun the Punjāb; Amritsir being their head-quarters. Long before their time, however, Lāhor was a town of note. Thrice has it been desolated; Nādir and Ahmad Shāh each in turn carried destruction through its ancient halls, its dwellings of centuries; and the merciless *Sikhs* completed the work; so that when Māharājah Runjīt Singh made it the seat of his government, he had almost to found the city anew.

Out of thirty-six of the old town divisions only six now remain: they are encircled by a strong and handsome wall, enclosing also some new ground, and forming a sweep of four *kos*[1]—an armed enclosure not often rivalled. The wall is, throughout the greater part of its extent, fronted by a fausse-braye, and a deep, though narrow ditch; there are twelve gates and as many wickets, each of the former having a double entrance, so that if any adversary did force the outer gate, he must pass through a flanking fire before reaching the second. The parapets of the main work could be easily

[1] A measure, varying from a mile-and-a-half to five miles, but usually equivalent to two English miles.

knocked over, but those of the fausse-braye, having no command, could scarcely be battered, except from the crest of the glacis.

This rough sketch of the works I by no means profess to be strictly accurate, though it is not intentionally otherwise. I give my impressions as received on that first morning of my entrance, when, in fact, I saw as much, if not more, of the town, than in all my future service.

Emerging from the narrow streets (not quite so narrow, however, as those of Kābul or Herāt), I left the city by the *Mochī*[1] gate; and what a change of scene! Before me lay a ruined mass of mosques,[2] palaces, and tombs, relics of a former age; their mutilated fragments looking even more grim, from the grotesque intermixture of Indo-European buildings and gardens, the residences of foreigners in Runjīt's service.

But if I go on much longer describing, the reader will be as weary as I was. While I continued to thread my way under a burning sun, to a garden-house, which, through the kindness of a native friend, had been placed at my service, I almost unconsciously uttered aloud the thoughts

[1] *Mochī*, shoemaker, leather-dresser. In the East, different trades occupy different quarters.

[2] *Mosque*, the universal European corruption of *Masjīd*, a Musālmān place of worship.

that the scene suggested: "A day or an hour sufficed to destroy all this; but even the genius of the wonderful man who reigns in the Punjāb has not been able in twenty years to restore the appearance of vitality, much less to put breath and strength into the ruined capital." My soliloquy was interrupted by a little, good-natured, pert-looking Moslem, who civilly saluted me as he rode alongside.

"Ah, *Sāhib*,[1] you are an *Amīr*;[2] I perceive it by your thoughts; you cannot look unmoved on the scene before you. But you call our ruler a great man. Is it greatness to destroy the shelter of the poor man, in order to build up lofty abodes for the rich? All that you have seen in the new town is the produce of plunder, of oppression, of double-dyed tyranny. The cost of the walls has been defrayed at the expense of one wealthy merchant of Amritsir, whose hoards have been taken, nominally to pay the workmen, but in fact to fill the purses of the supervisors."

"What you say, my friend," replied I, "can hardly be true; but, at any rate, who made you or me the Māharājah's judge? He is vicegerent

[1] *Sir*, in addressing any one; a "*gentleman*," when speaking of another person.

[2] A prince, applied to a man of rank.

here, and will have to answer hereafter to him who made him monarch.—Sādī says, 'the smoke of the poor man's heart goes up to heaven;' and so it is—fifty years will level all distinctions, and then, as the same poet says, 'what matters it to die on a silken pillow, or on the cold earth?'"

"The *Sāhib* is a poet and a philosopher," replied my friend; "if my lord will permit his servant, he will be in attendance, and, perchance, may make himself useful."

I liked the man's alert, intelligent air, and, as we now had reached the garden-house I was in search of, I desired him, as I alighted, to attend at the third watch of the day.

Having seen to my good horse's fare, and the comfort of my faithful followers, I refreshed myself with bathing, and then breakfasted on a thick, dry *chapātī*,[1] and a cup of eau sucrée, a beverage which, in my travels, had with me taken the place of every other. I then despatched my principal attendant with a flowery epistle, accompanied with the offering of a handsome gold watch, to *faqīr* Azīzūdīn,[2] one of the favourites of the Māharājah.

[1] A thin, unleavened cake.

[2] *Faqīr* literally means beggar, and generally a religious mendicant. In this instance, however, it is used as a title of

Scarcely had I done this, and stretched myself on the *chārpaī*[1] to rest, when my friend of the morning, who now made himself known as Chānd Khān, was announced. He was mounted on a horse of good blood, which he managed with a half-jaunty, half-military air. His whole appearance gave me the idea of what I can fancy Amīr Khān's[2] *Sirdārs*[3] to have been, half-gentleman, half-rogue, mingling in his person

respect, and is with *Pīr*, (a Saint) and other such titles, often arrogated by men whose holiness or poverty lies only in the name.

[1] A bedstead, formed of a light wooden frame, on four short legs, and laced over with twine, or a broad tape called *nawār*.

[2] For the benefit of English readers, I may say, that Amīr Khān was a *Pathān* adventurer, who, during the first twenty years of the present century, took a conspicuous part in the wars of Upper and Central India. Born of poor, but respectable parents in the north of Rohilkand, he commenced his career as a private horseman in 1788. After serving first one chief, then another, he adhered pretty steadily to the family of Juswant Rao Holkar, until 1818, just before the battle of Mehidpūr, when he was gained over by the British, under guarantee of holding, unmolested, his possessions, the value of which was about two hundred thousand pounds per annum. After this arrangement, he retired from public life, and was virtually a prince in his own territory.

[3] A chief; a Hindū title, equivalent to the Mūsalmān "Khān."

both the accomplishments of the soldier and civilian.

Chānd Khān wore a tightly-fitting but high turban of white muslin—*paijāmahs*[1] of Multān silk, red with a white stripe—a vest of white flowered muslin, and a *dopatta*[2] of the yellow Bahāwulpūr *Khes*, or twilled silk. He accosted me with "*salām alaīkūm, ahwāl bukhair ast?*"[3] and his air had all the affection of a friend and the familiarity of an old acquaintance. I was not prepared for this, and looked rather puzzled. "The *Sāhib* is surprised; the master of favour is not displeased at his servant?"

"No, my friend; but we of the West do not give our confidence on an hour's acquaintance."

"My lord says truly; every country has its customs; and the men of Kābul, among whom I perceive by his accoutrements and speech my lord has dwelt, are ready with a word or a blow. Their hearts, like those of their mistresses, are easily excited to good or evil."

"Your speech is strange, my friend," I replied; "who, or what are you?"

"In a word, my lord, I am an adventurer,

[1] Loose drawers, fastened by a string run round the waist.

[2] Literally, "*two breadths*," a wide scarf, with a seam up the centre.

[3] "Peace be upon you." "Is all well with you."

free of the world; I am a *Pathān*, originally from Kābul, and for some generations my ancestors have served the Chiefs of Multān. My father died by the side of Muzaffar Khān, in defending his fortress against the one-eyed *Sikh*. After a six months' defence, Multān fell to Runjīt Singh; and my country was no longer an abode for me. I followed the heir of my prince into captivity. The allowance granted to Sarfarāz Khān scarcely furnishes food and raiment for his household; how then are his retainers to subsist? A few of the bolder spirits manage to hang on; ostensibly we eat his bread, we are protected by his name; and, one of us being a *Baiparī*,[1] and another having taken the *Pahal*,[2] we profess to eke out our means by trade. Under this guise, I will not conceal from my lord, that we levy contributions on the spoilers of our land. The *raiyat*, the traveller, the merchant, or the true believer, we touch not; but what mercy should the dogs of *Sikhs* expect at our hands?"

Here my informant laid his hand on his *talwar*,[3] and, excited by his feelings, raised his voice beyond the cautious and confidential tone

[1] A trader.

[2] Initiation to the Sikh religion; see note 2, p. 10.

[3] A sword.

in which he had been speaking; he paused, and I inquired, "And do you not thus put your own lives in peril? Does the Māharājah keep so bad a watch over his subjects?"

"We have friends at court," replied Chānd Khān, "and we are cautious; when possible, we perform our work secretly, and never shed blood except in self-defence, to put a witness out of the way: our dress is that of the accursed *Sikhs*, which is in itself a pass."

"But," said I, "can you with the costume assume the air and features of so peculiar a race?"

"Most people believe not, and in this mistake lies part of our safety; but can a person of the *Sāhib's* discernment suppose that a people composed of the off-scouring of all other tribes have not as much difference in their features as in their castes? Go to the *bazār*,[1] take any dirty, naked, *lūchā*,[2] twist up his hair, give him a lofty turban and a clean vest; comb out and lengthen his beard, and gird his loins with a yellow *kamarband*;[3] put a clumsy sword by his side, and a long spear in his cowardly hand; set him on a strong, bony, two-year-old horse, and you have a passable *Sikh*."

[1] Market.

[2] Scoundrel.

[3] Cloth girded round the loins.

"Truly, you are plain enough spoken, my friend."

"But not too much so, my lord; I see, by your kindling eye, that you delight in a stirring life; and could we count you and your bold party of our band, you would soon learn the secrets of our trade. My lord looks astonished at my boldness, but I am safe in the hands of an honest soldier."[1]

"You are, my friend, but you will not long be so, if you thus trust every traveller: however, as you are communicative, tell me a little of how politics stand? Whose word and will are law? Whose friendship is desirable? Who best understands the Māharājah? For, in return for your confidence, I may tell you that I am candidate for favour at court."

Without hesitation, Chānd Khān gave me a "catalogue raisonné" of all the employés; plentifully bespattering them all with dirt, and

[1] Chānd Khān's openness may appear absurd and incredible; but no one who has not tried could believe the confidence with which Europeans (especially where they are rare,) are treated by natives who receive any encouragement: their honour is implicitly trusted, not to betray, even where they do not approve. The original of Chānd Khān has told the author facts almost as dangerous to himself, though not of exactly the same nature, as those noted in the text.

giving a triple portion to those followers of the prophet who served the infidel tyrants.

Our conversation was interrupted by the arrival of *Khalīfa* Nūrūdīn, brother of the *faqīr* Azīzūdīn. Nothing daunted, my friend sat on, while the preliminary speeches passed between the new visitor and myself, and then rose and took his leave.

The *Khalīfa*[1] is a wily, oily-faced man. I met

[1] This title means a king, a cook, a tailor, or a pedagogue. Not being a successor of the prophet, Nūrūdīn (whose name means Light of the faith) had no right to the first interpretation, and would probably have felt affronted at any one of the others. An interesting mystery must therefore rest over the *Khalīfa-jī*. This individual may seem a strange medium for Bellasis to choose for his introduction at court, but the following letter from MM. Allard and Ventura shows that such things have been. The tone adopted by my hero is not precisely that of the Frenchman and Italian, but every man takes his own highway or byeway to gain his object.

(*Translated from Prinsep's Life of Runjīt Singh, page* 132.)

TO HIS MAJESTY THE KING.

Sire,—The favours showered on us by your majesty since our arrival in this capital are innumerable, and correspond to the high opinion we had formed of his [your] benevolence. Fame, which had borne the name of the King of Lāhor as far even as our abode, said nothing in comparison of what we have seen. Every thing around your majesty is great, and worthy of a sovereign who aspires to immortality. Sire, when

him with as many flowers of eloquence as he bestowed on me; and, while he hoped that this new bud of friendship would ripen into golden fruit, I trusted that the flag of my prosperity

we first had the honour of being presented to your majesty, we disclosed to him [you] the motive of our journey: the reply he [you] vouchsafed sets us at ease, but leaves us uncertain as to the future. We, therefore, had the honour of addressing your majesty a few days ago, to know whether our arrival in this state is agreeable to him [you], and whether we can render him [you] any service by our knowledge in the art of war, acquired as superior officers, under the immediate command of the Great Napoleon Bonaparte, Sovereign of France. Your majesty has not yet relieved us from this suspense, and we are still without his [your] commands. We have, therefore, reiterated our request in the French language, according to the advice of Nūrūdīn Sāhib, who leads us to believe that an individual employed about your august person understands our tongue. In this uncertainty, we beseech your majesty to condescend to forward us his [your] instructions, which we shall follow with the utmost punctuality.

We have the honour to be, with the deepest respect,
Sire, your majesty's most humble,
Most obedient, and most devoted servants,
C. VENTURA, C. ALLARD.

Lāhor, 1st April, 1822.

This address can only find a parallel in that of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon. The confusion of persons and tenses in the letter is as in the original French; the reason of its having been written in that language is explained in Prinsep's narrative.

would be unfurled in the sunshine of his Excellency's favour. We then came to matters of business, and I soon made it worth the *Khalīfa's* while to understand the necessity of introducing me to the Māharājah.

The next day but one was fixed for my appearance at court; attired and attended as when I entered Lāhor, I proceeded to the palace. Before arriving there, I met Runjīt himself, returning from his morning's ride; and, much as I had heard of the insignificance of his first appearance, it startled me; the more so, perhaps, from the contrast it presented to the wiry and athletic forms that surrounded him. He rode gracefully, on a handsome, active horse, and was followed by his principal *Sirdārs*, each with his silken *chātha*[1] carried by a running footman, and the whole cortège, followed by an escort of five hundred well mounted horsemen, and as many foot. They consisted of all tribes and castes, *Sikhs*, *Pathāns*, *Hindūs*, *Gūrkhās*, &c., all gaily attired in scarlet and yellow silk, the cavalry, sitting in high-peaked saddles, and armed to the teeth with matchlock, pistol, blunderbuss, sword, and spear; the others more lightly, but still efficiently armed. Some few

[1] Umbrella; carried as a symbol of rank.

Akālīs[1] too were present, conspicuous by their high blue turbans, girdled with quoits; but more so by their wild, maniac look and insolent gestures. On seeing me approach, some of these hailed me with curses and abuse, but Azīzūdīn sent one of his orderlies to withdraw me.

As the train approached the entrance to the Shālimār[2] gardens, the cavalry filed off, leaving the Māharājah, with his train, followed by the running footmen, to pass through a lane, formed by a regiment of his newly-raised infantry, who received him with presented arms. I was kept at the gate for some minutes after the Māharājah had entered; and, while thus detained, many of the soldiers broke their ranks and crowded round me; some gazed respectfully at my train and accoutrements, but more remarked with a sneer on my want of beard, and my half-European costume.

Some of the horsemen also drew up, and were more especially insolent: one of them, Nand Singh, second in command of one of the newly-

[1] Sikh fanatic.

[2] The name applied to the royal pleasure-grounds in most oriental capitals. These gardens are stiffly laid out, with straight walks, edged by cypress-trees, artificial ponds and fountains here and there, and formal-looking plats of flowers and shrubs at intervals.

raised cavalry corps (a scoundrel with whom I soon became better acquainted), was the most forward; he was a smart, active young man, with a bold and dissolute cast of countenance. He commenced caracolling his spirited little nag in circles closer and closer round me, half-muttering, half-chanting a ribald song. As he neared me, I warned him that my horse kicked; to this he deigned no answer, but, after a little, rode tilt by, grazing me, as if accidentally, with his steel-clad shoulder. I touched the rein of my good steed, gave him half a turn, pressed him with my sword-hand the veriest trifle on the loins, and, with one tremendous kick, he sent Nand Singh, horse and all, head over heels.

A dozen swords were instantly drawn, and as many matchlocks presented at me, but my four stout followers closed around; and, without affecting to believe my adversaries in earnest, I calmly expressed a hope that the fallen man was not hurt, regretting that he should not have taken my caution, and avoided my horse's heels. Whether owing to our firm aspect, or to the royal vicinity, I know not; but the bystanders held off, and treated us with vastly more civility during the few remaining minutes that I was kept waiting: and they looked with much

curiosity when an orderly of the prince's came to tell me I was summoned to the *durbār*.[1]

When ushered in, I found the monarch seated in a golden chair, surrounded by about a dozen of his ministers; several reporters were in the distance, catching every word, and noting it in the "court circular" for transmission to every corner of the empire. As I entered, the Māharājah half arose, and greeted me with much courtesy; my *nazar*[2] of a hundred-and-one rupees was removed, and I was told to be seated on the *farsh*, or carpet, near his majesty. My own name and my father's, my place of birth, and my age, were asked and told; and it was explained that, though a *wilāyati*, I was not an Englishman. I was then asked what I knew, what I could do, and what I wanted — all in a breath: and my reply was to the effect that I could do anything, was ignorant of nothing, and, having heard the fame of the king, was come from a far country to offer my services.

"You speak Persian?"

"Yes, I have been some time in Persia."

"Can you build a fort? Can you cure a long-standing disease? Can you cast a gun? Can you shoe a horse? Can you mend my watch, which has stopped?"

[1] Audience, levée. [2] Offering.

"All, through your highness's *iqbāl*[1], is in the reach of mortal; and what other men have done, what should prevent Bellasis from doing?"

"*Shāhbāsh, faqīr*, he is a bold *jawān*,[2] this friend of yours!"

"He is, your highness, but try him, and you will find his merits exceed his words; the King of Rūm, the *Shāh* of Persia, the *Amīrs* of Scinde, all asked him to join them as a brother; but he would devote his sword to none but the lion of the Punjāb." During this flourish in my behalf, two nearly naked wretches were dragged in, caught in the act of pilfering at the garden-gate: they did not deny the charge; and the nose of one and ears of the other were sentenced to be cut off. In as short a time as I can write it, the sentence was executed, and the culprits, bleeding as they were, were driven out.

"Sharp work, Bellasis," observed the king, as I looked after the mutilated thieves: "we do not take life, but we punish."

My heart sickened, and I ventured to remark that perhaps they were led on by hunger. A dozen voices stirred to hush me, and the *faqīr* gave me an admonitory look. "Let him alone,"

[1] Auspicious influence. [2] Young man.

said Runjīt, "I like plain speaking, and he is but a *nya jawān*.[1] You ride well, I hear, friend?"

"I have strode a horse from my youth, your highness."

"Well, you *faringīs*[2] leap your horses. There is a fellow just entering who will show you the way over that fence." I looked at the man pointed out, and recognised Nand Singh, who, as an acknowledged favourite, had been allowed to force his way in, probably to ascertain whether mention had been made of the fracas at the door. I saluted him gravely, but politely; he returned the salām with a half-surly, half-defying air; and we were all forthwith, *vazīrs*,[3] scribes,[4] *omedwārs*, plaintiffs, defendants, and prisoners, bundled out to the garden.

The Sikhs are indubitably bad horsemen, however common report may say to the contrary; their horses are so hard worked, so scantily fed, and so badly bred, that they have no spirit for the rider to quell: however, Nand Singh was by profession a *chābuk sowār*,[5] and at Ludīanā had followed the hounds in the train of some European he had there served.

[1] A new hand. [2] Frank. [3] Minister.

[4] Candidate for favour.

[5] Literally, "*whip-rider*;" a dashing horseman, a horse-breaker.

Delighted at the opportunity of showing off against me, he urged his horse towards the fence pointed out by the Māharājah; but the animal, being tightly curbed and bitted, failed to clear it, insignificant as it was, and fell heavily with his rider. I took the signal, gently touched Chānda with my heel, and, springing over the barricade, wheeled round, and, on my return, cleared both it and the body of my prostrate foe. In another instant, I was at the feet of the Māharājah: "*Shābhāsh*, Bellasis, you shall teach my lancers. You are a colonel now in my service, and shall have a *khilat*[1] on the spot. If you are but as bold in the field as in the garden, we shall soon be good friends. But tell me, what was this squabble at the gate?"

I related the transaction simply as it happened, and Runjīt replied, "You look as if you spoke the truth, Bellasis; Nand Singh has been made too much of, and is ever daring in the wrong: besides, he showed to-day that he cannot ride. But you must be careful; my palace-grounds are not the scene for a tumult, nor are my guards fit subjects for experiments as to the power of your horse's heels. A day shall be fixed for you again to attend, and you will then receive a *parwānah*[2]

[1] Dress of honour. [2] A written order.

of instalment in your new office, and instructions for your conduct. Your fortune is in the ascendant; be prudent, and do not rashly mar it."

The Māharājah expressed this counsel as much by signs and gestures as by words: I signified my respectful assent, and we all returned to the hall of audience. A *khilat* was then presented to me, consisting of eleven pieces, which included a horse and accoutrements, a sword, a pair of shawls, a pearl necklace, a shawl *chogha*,[1] and two pieces of fine muslin; the value of the whole amounting to eleven hundred rupees. These, with a bag containing a thousand rupees, were delivered to my attendants, and I was dismissed.

The words of the Māharājah were blunt, but his manner was mild and conciliating; and, even had I received less flattering marks of his favour, I could have been at no loss to read the impression my reception had made on the courtiers, plainly written as it was in the eyes of all. Many who, on my entrance, had muttered, "Here's another *Faringī*" — "Have we not enough of them already?"—"Do not Allard, Ventura, Avitabili, Court, monopolize enough of the royal favour?" and such like observations,

[1] A kind of pelisse.

now were silent, or with bland gestures and fawning caresses pressed forward to offer their services and congratulations. I said little in reply, but, civilly making my way among them, took the road to my own dwelling.

CHAPTER II.

A favourite has no friends—The road to royal favour is sometimes miry—Be master of yourself, and you will be nobody's slave—Be chary of your presence, if you would have it prized—The honey of a king's favour resting on you may be known by the buzzing of flies around.

The sun was high in the heavens when I reached my dwelling; and such a sun! he only can understand its power who has been exposed to it in the hot winds. The burning rays showering down on a man's head, penetrating every defence, reflected in a thousand directions from the parched, arid ground; while the scorching wind catches the breath, the eyes are blinded with the glare and dust, and the brain feels absolutely boiling. At this season, when frequently, for days together, the sky is one sheet of torrid dust, what mockery does there not seem in European descriptions of "fresh morning," "gorgeous noon," "dewy eve!"

Getting under a roof, I felt as if an iron cap

had been removed from my head; I bathed, dressed myself in loose, white muslin, and reclined on a *chārpaī*, to take my frugal meal, and think over the events of the morning. I saw that if I had made one friend, I had roused many enemies; how was I, a foreign stranger, to secure the one, and disarm the others?

While thus meditating, in glided the *faqīr* Nūrūdīn, who, being seated, congratulated me on the events of the morning; "*afrīn, afrīn,*[1] *sāhib*—your star is in the ascendant. Never before had *wilāyati* such a reception! Your fortune is secure!"

"And to what!" inquired I, with great simplicity, "will that fortune lead?"

"To what!—asks the sāhib? Favour and fortune are here synonymous; you will have the command of an army, the government of a province, or the ....."

"Ah, but"—I interrupted him; and then, checking myself, added, "Good *Khalīfa-jī*, whatever I obtain will be through your favour, and you will not find me ungrateful."

The *faqīr* touched his forehead, and, drawing nearer to me, said, in a confidential tone, "It is to show my own and Azīzūdīn's desire to serve

[1] Well done.

you that I now come to warn you of plots already laid to cut short your career. Your best policy is to make friends of the brother Rājahs, Dhyān, and Gulāb Singh; and to avoid either quarrels or intimacy with the Europeans in the Māharājah's service. You are young, and appear spirited; but, to prosper, you must restrain your passions. I do not speak of any individual as your enemy, but I warn you that there are many to whom you will be as a thorn in the eye. Remember, our practice is different from that of you *wilāyatīs;* no man with us goes about unarmed and unattended; and the higher he is in favour, the more he requires precautions."

I thanked the *faqīr* for his advice; and, not giving me time to question him further, he rose and took his leave, ordering in a bag of one hundred rupees and certain trays of fruits and sweetmeats, sent as a *ziyāfat*[1] by the Māharājah.

While my people were abroad picking up news, I had time for much cogitation, and chalked out in my own mind the line of conduct I should pursue; and I will take this opportunity of introducing not only the result of the day's delibe-

[1] A banquet.

rations, but the opinion I formed of Runjīt and his court during my stay at Lāhor, which will save after repetitions, and be a clue to my story.

Runjīt Singh was at this time about fifty years of age; of mean appearance, one-eyed, and small of stature, his constitution much worn out by hard living and debauchery. Wholly illiterate, but gifted with great natural intelligence, and a wonderfully quick apprehension and retentive memory, he manages, better than those more learned, to transact the current business of his kingdom. All the revenue accounts pass under his own eye; and during their audit, his whole attention is directed to trying how much he can clip and pare. A true statement he does not reckon among possibilities; so that when the accounts seem all fair and square, and the revenue rendered even exceeds the stipulated sum, he always disallows a certain per centage, the tenacity of his memory enabling him to follow out the most complicated statements.

For his age and country, he may truly be called a great, and, in some respects, even a good king; he is active, enterprising, and, to a certain extent, just. Kind and liberal to those within his sight, he is much beloved by his per-

sonal followers, though the English proverb, "out of sight, out of mind," is in his case as applicable as is the oriental one, "a dog in the presence is better than a brother afar." From the same easiness of disposition, he rarely refuses a request, though his promise is by no means a sure *sunud*.[1] I have heard him accused of grasping rapacity, and, I admit, justly; but we must judge him by his education and temptations, and by this standard his appetite for riches is not greater than was to be expected. He has been called faithless, and, on some occasions, has deserved the charge; but show me the prince, ancient or modern, who, tempted as he was to breach of faith, kept the terms of treaty as he did with the British. It may be said truly that the worst parts of his rule are those common to oriental despots, while the favourable points arise from his individual character.

Personally, Runjīt Singh is brave, and has slain many an enemy in the field; but I am not aware of his having ever in cold blood ordered an execution, either in the way of punishment or revenge: and, while those of the royal blood are all but begging their bread at Delhi and

[1] A grant, a warrant.

Kābūl,[1] he almost invariably provides for the families of his conquered enemies.

The annual circuits that the Māharājah makes through the country give him the opportunity of seeing almost every village, and his extraordinary memory keeps a register of what he has seen; so that when asked for grants of land, he gives with his eyes more open than those of granters usually are. He detests complaints, and usually stipulates with his farmers that none are to reach his ear; yet, as he frequently travels, and is seen daily, some poor wretch or other frequently attracts his notice, and makes a complaint. Runjīt's eye is, therefore, now and then opened to what is going on. One of

[1] In reference to Runjīt Singh providing for the families of his conquered enemies, it may be said that he usually granted either jagīrs or small pensions to those he ousted, and sometimes even to those who had no claim on him. More than one connexion of the present royal house of Kābūl is a petty pensioner on Lāhor. But Calcutta is the place that will figure in future history as the nest of ex-rulers and fugitive kings; there they congregate as of old to Rome, and there they follow the governor-general's chariot-wheels, though not to be cast from the top of the Ochterlony monument when the triumph is over, but to have a choice of residence, and a pension proportioned to their delinquencies; from eight lākhs of rupees per annum to Bajī Rao at Bhitūr, to *dāl-bhāt*,* and a dungeon at Chunār to Mūna Jān.

* Split peas and rice: food for the poor.

his favourite modes of sounding those about him is to set them to dispute in his presence, when a tone or innuendo that would be lost on a duller ear catches his.

In reviewing the Māharājah's character, we must be persuaded that, with his meagre, stunted, ungainly form, deficient in those personalities that win the respect of barbarians, he must possess vast ability, address, and moral courage; for he not only drew all around into his wishes, but he knew when to yield and how to contract his measures. Having raised himself from a petty chief to a conqueror, he had Holkar[1] for his refugee, and all Hindustān in a blaze around him: yet he, then a young and stirring leader, had judgment enough not to join himself to the Mahrāthā, who, though now in adversity, had so lately been the scourge of the country, and driven before him many of the disciplined British troops. Indeed, his whole conduct showed that

[1] Jeswant Rāo Holkar, the Mahrāthā Chief of Indor, who cut off Colonel Monson's army, and thereby gained a high character in Hindustān. He afterwards encouraged the Rāja of Bhurtpūr to withstand the English, and was encamped under the walls of that fortress when the gallant Lord Lake with his most inadequate force four times stormed the place. When the Rāja eventually succumbed, Holkar fled across the Sutlej, and his after-fate is little known.

he had from the outset penetration enough to estimate justly his own power, and that of the English.

I must say a few words as to those whom I found the immediate personal favourites of the Māharājah, and with whom I had afterwards most to do.

The men in highest confidence were Rājah Dhyān Singh and Jemadār Khushiyāl Singh,[1] with the *faqīr* Azīzūdīn. The rise of the two first was not by the most respectable road. I believe there is little doubt that it was as ministers to Runjīt Singh's debaucheries that they both first obtained favour. Gulāb Singh and Suchet Singh, brothers to Dhyān Singh, are likewise wealthy and powerful; the territory and treasure of these brothers are not much inferior to those of his highness himself. Although the family is of good blood, it was in obscurity, and Gulāb Singh was only a common *sowār*. In a feud he killed a man, and, being close pressed by the friends of his victim, he took refuge in the Māharājah's tent, then pitched in the plain, as was his custom when reviewing his troops. Runjīt was pleased with the refugee's appearance, pardoned, and took him into fa-

[1] Lieutenant of the forces; the king being captain.

vour; and Gulāb soon introduced his brother, who in turnbr ought in Suchet Singh. Each in turn, by the basest subserviency to the Māharājah, and, being men of business and courage, made their way into his permanent favour. All three became *Rājās*, acquired *jāgīrs*[1] and contracts that have enriched them beyond count, and the command of troops and territory, that, with their own ability, make them dangerous subjects.

It was always a matter of astonishment to the well-wishers of Runjīt Singh that, wise and wary as he is, he allowed this fraternity such formidable power. Dhyān Singh knew the public feeling, and was ever on the spot to prevent its reaching his master's ear, or in his brief absences had trusty followers to watch every avenue. But somehow a little bird got access, and asked the Māharājah why he permitted such doings.

"Why," said the king, "it is my fate—I threw myself on them—it is my destiny." And so it is—Dhyān Singh has the doorway; he has monopolized the office of prime-minister, commander of the forces, and chief aide-de-camp to his highness: he has shut out almost all access; and though, as I before said, a supplicant does

[1] Rent-free tenure, commonly held on terms of feudal service.

sometimes make his way into the presence, and, raising the cry of "*dohāī*," obtains a hearing, yet he is so often hustled out that, however gracious may have been his reception from the sovereign, he has seldom courage or ability to try a second hearing. Suchet Singh and Gulāb Singh are seldom at court, but are in the provinces, commanding large bodies of troops, and administering the territory they hold in farm: the latter, holding the salt contracts, interferes directly with the bread of every man in the country.

Dyhān Singh, though slightly lame, is a fine-looking man, of a noble presence, polite and affable, of winning manners and modest speech. At *durbār*, he sits on the ground, and rather behind the Māharājah, while others, his inferiors in every way, are seated on chairs. The *Rāja* decidedly is, next to his master, the ablest man in the Punjāb, though, like him, so illiterate as scarcely to be able to sign his name.

Khushiyāl Singh, a native of Sahārunpūr, in the British territory, is now a coarse, vulgar-looking man, though, when he was one of the hundred picked soldiers appointed to the night guard of the Māharājah, he was a fine, handsome, young fellow. This was before the elevation of

Dhyān Singh. For fifteen years, Khushiyāl Singh held the command of the doorway, which is equivalent to that of the guards, as well as to the royal ear; but he was less cautious than his successor, and, on one occasion, having proposed to the Mahārājah to go from Lāhor to Amritsir, his highness suspected a plot for his own imprisonment. Upon this he determined to deprive Khushiyāl Singh of his command.

Fearful of offending a powerful faction by open supercession, the king got Dhyān Singh and his brothers, with their followers, up into the *Saman Būrj* (or citadel and palace), one night, by scaling the walls, and then quietly displaced the men of Khushiyāl Singh, who was wise enough to make no opposition, and who has since been wise enough to show no resentment. In other respects, he holds his former place in the *durbār*, and is consulted on all-important occasions.

An officer who had served in the Punjāb told me that such was the introduction of Gulāb Singh to the Mahārājah; but I have no further warrant for the fact. All the rest, however, that is here said of the Rāja is within the truth, as is notorious to all who are acquainted with

the Punjāb. Of late years, such has been the audacity, ability, and influence of the brotherhood, or rather of the two elder, that no year has passed without an extention of their territorial acquisitions.

A fair sample of their doings is the fact that the first intimation Runjīt Singh received of operations on the Ladāk frontier was the announcement of the occupation of Ladāk itself by Zorāwar Singh, the general of Gulāb Singh's troops. He is very wealthy, and has ability, but for want of firmness and conciliatory disposition has lost standing. He is harsh, and at the same time fickle; his immediate brigade of three regiments has been in frequent mutiny, and his lax political faith prevents his being trusted by any party. But he has amassed great wealth, and has several connexions in the Māharājah's service.

Rām Singh, the son of Zorāwar Singh, died not long since. Though but a lad himself, he had, about a year before his own death, caused the only son of a respectable commandant to be waylaid and murdered, because the boy had been the involuntary witness of a disgraceful act on his part, and had repeated the story. Rām Singh, however, died in his bed, a stripling general; while the father of the murdered lad,

though a good officer and well known at *durbār*, has had little employment since; showing what a court favourite may do even with shorn beams.

Khushiyāl Singh was once sent to assist Kunwar Sher Singh, the Māharājah's son, in the government of Kāshmīr, and to recover its ruined finances. The prince, seeing the tendency of his measures, gave up to him entirely, and escaped responsibility. Khushiyāl recovered some rents, screwed a few lākhs, and turned a season of dearth into one of most frightful famine, nearly depopulating the province, and sending the wretched inhabitants to the very centre of Hindustān, in search of bread. From the revenue it formerly yielded, of forty lākhs, Kāshmīr fell to eight; and only with nursing and care has it since reached sixteen. The Māharājah was of course much displeased, and for a while Khushiyāl Singh lost favour; but, at the time I am now writing, he is one of the most honoured counsellors. Though a first-class *Surdār*, he is still called *Jemadār*, the title he held when he was doorkeeper to the presence.

Azīzūdīn[1] was by birth and business a barber.

[1] I am not quite clear as to the rise of this official; but he is by birth a barber, and was at first known at court by the title of *hukīm*, or doctor; physic and the razor going together in the

Being a smart, bold young fellow, he obtained command of a regiment and a small territory. Falling into the clutches of Dīnā Nāth[1] and the accountants, he was so squeezed that he saw the futility of kicking against the pricks, or attempting to be independent; he, therefore, assumed the *faqīr*, and in that character attracted the notice of the Māharājah, and became a second Dhyān Singh.

East, as formerly they did in the West. More than one of the conversations given in this book, as occurring with Azīzūdīn, are real. He is a very eloquent and insinuating, and I believe not a bad man; he is trusted much by Runjīt Singh, both as a physician and counsellor, and has kept his place with the present and late ruler. *Faqīrs* and doctors, Mahommedan as well as Hindū and Sikh, are treated with equal respect at the Lāhor court. In Azīzūdīn's case the title is of course only assumed, but real beggars haunt the royal gardens and even the *durbār*. I was once myself insulted, when travelling south of the Sutluj, by "a beggar on horseback," or, at least, by one riding on a royal elephant, and attended by a silver stick.

[1] This worthy may be called "Accountant and Auditor General:" he and half a dozen other scribes successively examine the same accounts, passing nothing without vouchers; a plausible way to teach the straightforward that plain dealing is not always the way to get through business; for who that will cheat, will not fabricate? And how much easier is it to make out specious vouchers, than to do as any honest man will do, and deal with public money as he would with his own?

Azīzūdīn is his master's mouthpiece, and most ably he fills the office; he interprets a word or even a sign, and throws Runjīt's meaning at once into beautiful language; embellishing sound sense with rich and appropriate imagery; in his own phraseology, "he is a parrot of sweet sound." The *faqīr* is now merging into "the yellow leaf," and affects a dirty, slovenly, impoverished appearance; but he is rich, and particularly influential from having got the Māharājah's ear. This has procured for him a patch of land in almost every *jāgīr* in the kingdom; for without him or Dhyān Singh for intercessor no one would be safe.

The good word of even a common orderly at *durbār* may be of use; and therefore all, having ingress, are more or less valuable as friends, or formidable as foes; all those who hold employments at a distance from the court accordingly fee the *durbār* attendants, keeping one or more of them in regular pay. Among the counsellors, probably Rām Singh, Gobind Rām, and Benī Rām, are the most respectable; but their influence is far inferior to that of the favourites already mentioned.

The two first are brothers, sons of Bustī Rām. Rām Singh has taken the *pahul*, and is therefore a Sikh — which neither his brother nor their

father would consent to do. The latter ingratiated himself with Runjīt Singh, by secluding himself and never going to the Māharājah unless when sent for; nay, it is said that the king always went to him, and in one of his visits asked Bustī Rām if he was satisfied and comfortable, and if the almoner dispensed to him his share of the royal bounty; the other answered, "I get nothing; I cannot be a Hindū; surely your money is not intended for me?" and then repeated a verse to the following effect:—

"When your dominion was complete,
To me you gave a single sheet;
To one scarce fit to be my slave,
Jewels and robes and wealth you gave."

The Māharājah was pleased with his frankness, dismissed the unjust steward, put Bustī Rām in his place, treated the old man until his death with all respect, and then took his sons into confidence, as religious, medical, and political advisers. Gurmakh Singh, the youngest son of Bustī Rām, had only lately come into notice. The politics of the three brothers are opposed to those of Rāja Dhyān Singh and his family. Benī Rām (*Mishr*[1]) is nephew of another Bustī Rām, who was treasurer to Runjīt,

[1] One particular class of Brāhman.

and also to his father: on the uncle becoming superannuated, Benī Rām, who had been some time before introduced into the treasury office, succeeded as treasurer; he was much trusted by Runjīt Singh, and bore the character of a respectable man and a good financier.[1]

The European officers are kept more as *drills*, or as agents in the execution of difficult and dangerous enterprises, than as advisers. MM. Allard and Ventura[2] came together through Persia and Affghānistān, into the Punjāb. They are

[1] On the Māharājah's death, the treasurer was placed in irons, it is said, because he would not betray his trust, and admit the young prince, No Nihāl Singh, into the treasury of his father, the imbecile Māharājah Kharak Singh. Benī Rām is again at liberty, and reinstated as treasurer.

[2] These officers have been already referred to in a note on the first chapter. The former is now dead. I have heard him called an intriguer, but believe he was only a good soldier, much respected by his men. It was the remnant of his cuirassiers who rallied round M. Mouton in the disturbances of 1841, when that officer seemed about to share the fate of Mr. Folkes, whom his men had murdered. Allard was employed solely in a military capacity, nor indeed has any other trust been often committed to Ventura, who professes not to wish for any charge beyond that of his troops; but having had a share of civil as well as military duty in Peshāwur, Mūltan, and lately in Mundī, which he carried on very successfully, it would be but natural were he to wish for further opportunity of so distinguishing himself.

said to have suffered great distress on their travels, and even to have officiated in the great mosque of Peshāwur, or Kābūl, as criers to the morning prayers. The latter incident was mentioned to me by a confidential servant of Shāh Zamān's, who very possibly may have exaggerated, or fabricated the tale.

MM. Court and Avitabili entered Runjīt Singh's service shortly before I did. They likewise came through Persia, and there served for a time; the former organized a corps of artillery for one of the princes, but the Punjābi was a better paymaster than the Persian. Court has always been employed as a soldier, commanding a brigade or a division; he is a scientific man, modest, and honourable, and has feathered his nest less than any of his brethren.

Of Avitabili the most lenient view that can be taken is, to consider him as set in authority over savage animals—not as a ruler over reasonable beings — as one appointed to grind down a race, who bear the yoke with about as good a grace as "a wild bull in a net," and who, catching their ruler for one moment asleep, would soon cease to be governed. But the ground of complaint alleged against him is that he "acts as a savage among savage men," instead of showing them that a Christian can

wield the iron sceptre without staining it by needless cruelty — without following some of the worst fashions of his worst neighbours. Under his rule, summary hangings have been added to the native catalogue of punishments, and not a bad one either, when properly used; but the ostentation of adding two or three to the string suspended from the gibbet, on special days and festivals, added to a very evident habitual carelessness of life, lead one to fear that small pains are taken to distinguish between innocence and guilt, and that many a man, ignorant of the alleged crime, pays with his life the price of blood. It is the General's system, when, as often happens, a Sikh, or any other of his own men, disappears at or near any village in the Peshāwur territory, to fine that village, or to make it give up the murderer or murderers. The latter is the *cheapest* plan; a victim or victims are given up, and justice is satisfied. He might be as energetic and summary as he pleased, and no one would object to his dealing with a lawless people in such a way as to restrain their evil practices; but such scenes as frequently occur in the streets of Peshāwar, equally revolting to humanity and decency, might be dispensed with.

Still, General Avitabili has many of the attri-

butes of a good ruler; he is bold, active, and intelligent, seeing every thing with his own eyes; up early and late. He has, at the expense of his own character for humanity, by the terror of his name, *saved* much life. It is but just to state, that the peaceful and well disposed inhabitants of Peshāwur, both Hindoo and Mahomedan, united in praise of his administration, though all with one voice declared that mercy seldom mingled in his decrees. Believed to fear neither man nor devil, Avitabili keeps down by grim fear what nothing else *would* keep down—the unruly spirits around him, who, if let slip, would riot in carnage; his severity may therefore be extenuated, as the least of two evils.

Avitabili's whole system of morals is oriental, avowedly eschewing force, when artifice can gain the point, and looking on subjects as made to be squeezed. In person he is tall and stout, with bushy beard, whiskers and moustache; marked with the smallpox, and with a countenance exhibiting at times the workings of human passion, but again lighted up into even a pleasing expression. With little education, but strong natural sense and ability, he has acquired a good knowledge of Persian, and of the Punjābi dialect. Strangely influencing those around him, and influenced by them, his history is a curious

study, and, when his own generation has passed away, will hardly be believed.

Mr. Harlan, an American, is the only other *wilāyati* (I was going to say European) who was much trusted by Runjīt Singh, and any regard that may have obtained between them was converted into hate. Mr. Harlan was a man of strong passions, and seems to have taken little pains to restrain them: he was chiefly employed as a civilian in the district of Guzrāt, but says his unflinching firmness lost him his service. He was a man of considerable ability, great courage, and enterprise, and, though judging by appearances, he seemed peculiarly well cut out for the work of a stirring partizan, he was dismissed in no very flattering terms, and was not ashamed in after days to boast of having brought down Dost Mahomed on his former master. Yet he had little success when he served the Affghān; showing, perhaps, that the English and American temperament is less suited to the meridian of oriental court favour than the French and Italian; though history and fact show which is best adapted for supremacy in this country.

No other European in the Lāhor service has a command exceeding two regiments, and not above three or four such individuals, in the rank of gentleman, now remain there. These receive

from £500 to £1000 per annum, but have no very enviable situations. There may be about as many deserters and vagabond Franks in the artillery, receiving ten shillings a day. The mushroom military discipline attempted by Runjīt Singh never harmonized in its parts; discipline could not be established and upheld by the utmost exertions of a general standing alone, without colonel, captain, or subaltern. Natives, bearing those titles, may understand the drill, but it would require more than one generation to instil the discipline, the *spirit* of European officers.

Allard and Ventura have been allowed almost unlimited authority in organizing the new levies; promotions and appointments have rested chiefly with them, and any opposition to their orders has been summarily punished. As may be supposed, the new system was very much disliked by the *Surdārs;* but Runjīt was determined to carry out his plans; and no greater crime could be alleged against gentle or simple than that of being a *dungāwālla*,[1] or *tukrārī*.[2]

The result of the system has been a very efficient body of troops, infantry, cavalry, and artillery; but already is patronage beginning to sap

[1] Mutineer. [2] Grumbler.

its foundations. The building completed, the Māharājah does not think the same care necessary for its preservation as for its construction; and boys, simpletons, and dotards are here, as in older services, creeping into command. The keystone, too, of an army is wanting; there is no undisputed, punctual pay. The regulars are certainly better looked to than the other troops: but, while the coffers of the state are overflowing with the plunder of Multān and other provinces, the army is seldom less than a twelvemonth in arrears. Once, indeed, I saw the Māharājah obliged to take refuge in Gobindgurh,[1] from the violence of his Gurkha Battalion, who were roused to desperation by being kept out of their pay.

Rarely is any body of troops paid, except on representation from their commandant, at the *durlār*, that they are starving or mutinying;

[1] This is the citadel of Amritsir, and supposed by the Sikhs to be impregnable; but it is more than doubtful whether it could stand a week against an artillery train. Most of the royal treasures are there deposited, the remaining portion being in a *Musjid* and in the *Summan burj* at Lāhor. Imāmūdīn, a younger brother of Azīzūdīn's, was the civil Governor of Gobindgurh, but there was likewise more than one Thānadār* there, independent of him.

* In India, applied to a police officer, but, among the Sikhs, often implying military command.

the answer then, if favourable, is a *tankwāh*,[1] or order on some one or more of the royal domains. This may be ruin or great profit, according to the power and means of him to whom the order is given, and him on whom it is made; for, as already hinted, the Māharājah, when acquiescing, by no means intends positively to comply, but only to quash importunity; and over haste in executing an ungracious decree, thereby causing after reference to the *durbār*, is by no means approved. Indeed, as will soon appear, Runjīt himself desired me not to be precipitate in fulfilling any important order; and I have myself seen five orders come within a twelvemonth, all couched in the most positive terms, and at direct contradiction with each other.

The case was this—a small *jāgīr* was grante by a dependant chief to one of his followers; they quarrelled, and the principal wished to dispossess him: both appealed to the paramount authority; when pressing orders for instant delivery to one were followed by a messenger to put the other in possession; and he again had scarcely started, when an order was sent to the *Surdārs* in the neighbourhood, to concentrate their troops, and put the fir t grantee in possession. So it

[1] Revenue assignment.

went on for nearly a year, when at length a detachment of the royal troops, by stratagem, but with the full concurrence of the *durbār*, got possession of the small *gurhi*[1] that commanded the estate, which they seized from both contending parties, who discussed joining against their common master, and were only prevented from doing so by being taken by surprise. This incident may give a fair idea of the mode in which military and political affairs were carried on.

Of the revenue and judicial department I must say a few words. Two-fifths is the proportion nominally taken by the *Surkār*. At this rate, on an estimate of the average proceeds of a certain term of years, the whole country is farmed out, in larger or smaller portions. The estimate may be above or below the mark, the *raīyats* contumacious; it is all the *qismat*[2] of the farmer; he must realize the amount, and look out for his own profits too, without collecting more than two-fifths of the produce. If he exceed this proportion, or if his profits are high, it is sure to reach the sove-

[1] *Tower;* one for defence being erected on every patch of cultivation, among the Sikhs.

[2] *Destiny.* A word that solves all problems in human life.

reign's ear, and he then disallows proportionately on the accounts returned, leaving just so much as he thinks will stimulate the farmer's industry, and keep him from disgust.

Should the farmer, however, fail in realizing the sum specified by government, he is imprisoned with more or less severity, degraded, cast off, or forgiven, and allowed another chance in another quarter, with the balance written against his name, according to his interest at court, the opinion of his ability, or the cause of the defalcation.

The revenue-farmer is judge, magistrate, and often custom-master, too, within his jurisdiction.

The *Adālat*[1] is another rich source of revenue to the state, fine being the punishment awarded in almost every case, and being always the ready means of avoiding all other retribution. In civil cases, the gainer is mulcted one-fourth of the property at issue, and so common is it for both parties to pay for a decision, that he only is considered a bad man and an unjust judge, who takes your money without furthering your cause. Under such a system, the poor man has little chance; and though the vagabond thief, pressed

[1] Court of justice.

perhaps by hunger, has his nose and ears cut off, and is thereby irrecoverably branded one of the profession, the wealthy robber and dexterous ruffian ride unmolested through the land.

From the customs alone, twenty-four lākhs of rupees enter the royal treasury; Amritsir yields nine lākhs. We may judge what remains to the trader, who not only has to pay this recognised levy, but to pass through the screw-press of all the subordinate officers. Rules and rates are laughed at, every ferry and every pass is guarded, and the *baipārī* [1] pays according to the humour of the watchman, which in turn is regulated by a close calculation whether the amount taken will crush the nest-egg, and prevent the trader returning, or bring down on himself observation, and consequent squeezing.

The picture I have sketched of my new fellow-subjects and our ruler is not a very pleasant one; but it has its reliefs, and we must consider the elements Runjīt had to work upon, and the time he had to consolidate his power. He found the country swarming with petty chiefs, each a legalised plunderer and murderer; the people were all ignorant, idle, listless, and brutally sensual. Persia, Affghānistān, and the adjacent

[1] Trader.

parts of Hindūstān were in much the same condition. Runjīt has made life comparatively secure, and he must have done something for property, or we should not see the existing wealth of Lāhor and Amritsir, nor would his subjects shew so little anxiety to locate themselves under the neighbouring British rule.

My reader must forgive me, if I have given him too long a dose of history and politics, but I could not, without this preface, make the rest of my tale intelligible. The result of my review of those around me was, that though I might serve a better government, I might be under a worse; that it gave hope to all, roused emulation, brought out the energies of employés, and prevented their hanging on as execrescences and nuisances, when age, imbecility, or carelessness had rendered them a curse to the country. As a military despotism, the government is a mild one; and, as a federal union, hastily patched up into a monarchy, it is strong and efficient. We may see its faults without overlooking its better points. But I must pause a moment to mention three princes, whom I find I have omitted.

Khurak Singh, the eldest, is an imbecile, and affects the *religieux*. Sher Singh, the second, is far from clever, but he is prudent; he is fond of imitating the military and Europeans. Tārā

Singh, the third, is a dissolute vagabond, leading the most reckless life in the common *bazārs*. None of them appear much at *durbār*, and the two latter are known not to be really sons of the Māharājah, who, perhaps, keeps quiet the mystery of their birth, as a check against any possible designs of his acknowledged son.

Let it be observed that I do not offer my rough notes as materials for history, but rather as first impressions and crude gatherings from very probably interested informers. Few can be so simple as not to take all native reports "cum grano;" though the manner and even matter of the report give a clue as to its probable credibility. One man systematically lies within and without reason; he is as good as a weatherguage, and is only to be read with caution, *topsy-turvy*. Another sees what you want, fishes for it, thinks he has it, and tells accordingly. A third is paid for misleading you, and a fourth thinks he may be so. Another knows nothing, but wishes to be seen talking with the *faringī*. Having considered all the engines at work, if you scribble the evidence of one on a half margin, and can manage to parallel it with that of another of different class, caste, profession, and habits, and can keep each from knowing that the other is in your employ, you may then put *some* trust in their testi-

mony, where it agrees, testing it, however, when practicable, by further evidence. Give as little opinion of your own as possible; be merely seeking; *know* nothing, *think* nothing, or you will be made a tool in the hands of your own instruments.

With so much of advice, by way of dessert to the dry meal I have given the reader, I will squat myself on the ground, and take my own evening's repast. It was a fowl *pilāo*,[1] which it had pleased my cook to make rich and savoury, and to me it tasted peculiarly so, nothing having passed my lips since my simple morning's meal, and it was now evening. My custom was to rise before the dawn, to retire early, and seldom to repose during the day; a cake, or crust of bread, with a glass of water when I got up, kept me till nine o'clock; and my breakfast satisfied me till sunset. When marching, the morning's crust and breakfast changed places. In fact, my servants and myself have always partaken of the same pot, frequently of the same dish. No forbidden meat or liquor has passed my lips for years; and by strict temperance I have stood heat and fatigue that few Europeans could endure.

[1] Meat cooked with rice, butter, and spices.

The livelong day in the saddle has not prevented my rest at night; nor did a ride of nearly five hundred miles,[1] which I made in a week, interfere with my appetite or disturb my sleep. Abstinence and energy in yourself, and blood in your horses, will enable any man o good constitution to do as much. Thirty yards of fine muslin rolled round a European cap or hat, forms the best protection from the sun; but the night is the time for travelling, for any one who intends to last long in the East.

While I was munching my *pilāo*, and, in fancy, galloping over the plains of the Panjāb, Chānd Khān entered. Observing that I had but one dish, and no drink but sugar and water, he was surprised.

"Not drink, my lord! You never then will find favour in this besotted court, where all, with scarcely an exception, are drunkards, and where the strength of a man's brain is measured by the thickness of his head. And how does the Khān[2] like Sikh attire? for Runjīt Singh

[1] Though not a strong man, I have made such rides without suffering, simply by adhering to the principles here laid down, which are I believe the best that can be followed in this country.

[2] *Khān*, literally Lord, is the distinctive affix of Affghān names, but is often applied indiscriminately as a title of respect.

will want you to wear it. He has been making many inquiries about you, and has even had your servants up to examine them. Just now you are in high favour, but he will expect you to comply with all his whims."

"Then, friend," I replied, "he will be disappointed;" and the thought struck me that a little judicious opposition might stand me in more stead than implicit acquiescence; but, at any rate, I resolved neither to drink of his cup, nor to wear his garb. "I am not sure," I continued aloud, "that I shall take his service at all; I have friends in India, and may find employment with the British. At any rate, there are many princes who would be glad of my services. Shāh Shuja even now meditates the recovery of his kingdom, and what finer field could I have?"

"Excellent, my lord; your slave with fifty good *shumshers*[1] is at your disposal — fire-eaters, men whose faces are seen in the day of battle."

"Very well, Chānd Khān—if there be occasion, you shall not be forgotten."

I was pretty sure my expressed uncertainty would reach the Māharājah's ears; and so it

[1] Sabres.

did, with many exaggerations, increasing my value in his eyes tenfold. The next day but one was fixed for my second interview, but the next evening I expressed myself fatigued and unwell, and thus, on one pretext or other, put off my visit for a fortnight. Each day a *ziyāfat* of a hundred rupees, with sweetmeats, was brought. I was asked to administer strengthening medicine to the monarch, he feeling altogether feeble, and fearing another attack of paralysis, which had already more than once deprived him of speech. I sent a preparation of steel, of which Dhyān Singh had the benefit. Right or wrong, such was his report of its efficacy, that from having no appetite it had made him ravenous, that in all his limbs he felt twice the strength he had before, and so forth—that the Māharājah was in raptures, sent for me imperatively, and ordered me to be informed that if I could not come to him, he would himself go to me. The messenger brought ten times the usual *ziyāfat*. "To-morrow I will attend His Highness" was my answer.

In the morning a guard of honour was in waiting; and in very different state from my former appearance, and attended by a *Surdār* of some standing, I was taken to the *durbār*. Being seated on the carpet, close to his High-

ness, he asked me a hundred questions about Europe, England, America, of what caste I was myself, and of what were his European officers.

"For my own I can answer," replied I, "and you may write and ask Captain Wade at Ludiāna. For your officers I cannot undertake to say; some of them are of good blood, but of one I am somewhat doubtful. His countrymen are a bad set, but there is an old proverb, 'that a white sheep may be found in a black flock.' The Māharājah here interrupted me with a hearty laugh, whispers buzzed around, and the attendant *Mutasaddīs*[1] used their pens.

Dhyān Singh here put in his word. "The General," he said, (alluding to the second officer I had mentioned) "the General is a good man, and a *khair khwāh*.[2] Many voices responded, "*bahot ach'cha nek ādmī, bahādur, changā ādmī*,"[3] but I persisted, thereby affording Runjīt much amusement.

"Well, but where is this wonderful medicine, which has done such wonders for the *Rāja?*" asked the Māharājah. I produced two papers, which he seized, and handed one over to his minister. "Here, *faqīr*, take this." Azīzūdīn's

[1] Writer, secretary. [2] Well-wisher.

[3] Very good—good man, hero, fine fellow.

face was for a moment clouded, but he swallowed the steel, and affected instant raptures.

"Well, I will try the other myself," said Runjīt; and, for a wonder, actually took the dose. Without waiting to see its effects, he said to me, "Bellasis, I perceive you are a wise man; I have seen you and inquired about you; you are bold and you are able; you are young, but you have had experience; years and wisdom do not always go together; moreover, I am pleased with you. I promised you the command of a regiment—it is done; and in addition, I give you the management of Kōt Kāngrā district. It is wild and rugged in parts, but, savage as is nature, man is there more so. I deal plainly with you; the post is one of difficulty, the country has been mismanaged: the revenues were nine *lākhs;* they are now less than six; from you I will, for two years, accept five. Your salary shall be fifteen thousand rupees a-year, and I grant you the *nuzarānā*[1] of your villages."

"*Wāh, wāh, qismat! qismat!*" ejaculated many around.

"You shall, in addition to your own regi-

[1] *Nuzar,* an offering from an inferior; nuzarānā, offerings customary at certain times and on certain occasions.

ment of Lancers, have one of infantry to keep up the place, and also two corps of *Nujībs*;[1] the latter you will raise yourself and appoint your own officers. The regular corps shall be detached from *Jamadār* Khushiyāl Singh's brigade, and shall have a *tankwāh* on your revenues. Join without delay; attempt to have no secrets; leave a prudent *Vaqīl*[2] at the *durbār*, and keep the *Rāja* informed of all events. Remember that all I hear of you through other channels I put down against you. The post is high; the trust is great. Here" (and at a sign the *faqīr* held out a sealed packet) " are your secret instructions. Again I say, be vigilant, cautious, prudent, and let no complaint from the *raīyats* reach the presence. *Rukhsat!*[3] may fortune attend you."

A *khilat* of ten times the value of the last was then thrust upon me, amid shoutings, praises, and murmurs from those around. A title, too long and flowery to repeat, was bestowed on me, a bag of a thousand ducats put into my hand, and I was turned out before I could half express my thanks. I hastened home, much

[1] Literally, prince or noble; applied to certain local corps.

[2] Agent, ambassador, attorney.

[3] Dismissal: it would be a breach of good manners in a visitor to depart, till the host had given him *Rukhsat*.

more importuned than on the last occasion; now, even first-rate *Surdārs* were pleaders, or offerers of humble congratulations; and many were the *ommedwārs*[1] for *najībships*, and places of *Mutasaddī*, *Vaqīl*, &c. Hastily, and almost roughly, I elbowed my way through them all, anxious to be alone, and open the sealed packet.

[1] Candidates for favour, promotion, or situations.

CHAPTER III.

Runjīt's verdict on himself—The Lion is the painter this time—Laws are like spiders' webs, made to catch the weak, and let the strong escape—A digression, showing how to turn harmless zealots into formidable enemies—Some forests produce very indigestible fruit—You cannot open a lock till you apply the right key.

Hurrying into my dwelling, undressing and re-attiring in thin, wide *paijāmahs* and an *angarkha*, or light shirt, I tore open the cover and proceeded to read; but, to my dismay, the paper presented only an assemblage of unintelligible ciphers; however, as I unrolled the document, a slip of paper fell out, labelled, "to be kept with care," and bearing the *faqīr's* seal. In this I found a key to the cipher, and, after some puzzling, I read as follows.

"The wise man neglecteth not his duty towards his master; but, taking his seat in the hall of obedience, remembereth that humility and faithfulness cause exaltation. Falsehood

brings a man to shame, and lying lips dishonour their possessor. Be then contented with the fortune that has been poured on thy head; be faithful, honest, and true, and mankind will praise thee, and my favour will follow thee; think of thine end, and oppress not the poor; so shall thy name remain when all else of thee is gone."

"Aha! the rogue of a Māharājah has been at my friend Shekh Sādī," said I; "however, his advice is good, and I hope he acts thus wisely and well himself."

"Thus much of counsel for thee, Bellasis;" continued my instructor; "now give the ear of attention and the heart of obedience to the orders that follow. My kingdom is a great kingdom: it was small, it is now large; it was scattered, broken, and divided; it is now consolidated: it must increase in prosperity, and descend undivided to my posterity. The maxims of Taimur[1] have guided me; what he professed and ordered I have done. By counsel and providence, combined with valour, I have conquered; and by generosity, discipline, and policy, I have regulated and

[1] The "Institutes of the lame Tartar" would bespeak him a great man, an able, just, and benevolent monarch: but his acts form a melancholy contrast to the writings he dictated.

consolidated my government. I have rewarded the bold, and encouraged merit wherever it was to be found: on the field of battle, I exalted the valiant; with my troops I have shared all dangers, all fatigues. Both on the field and in the cabinet I shut partiality from my soul, and closed my eyes to personal comfort; with the robe of empire, I put on the mantle of care; I fed *faqīrs* and holy men, and gained their prayers; the guilty as the innocent I spared; and those whose hands were raised against myself have met my clemency; Sri-Purak-jī[1] has therefore been merciful to his servant, and increased his power, so that his territory now extends to the borders of Chīn[2] and the limits of the Afghāns, with all Multān, and the rich possessions beyond the Sutlej. To be the favoured servant of such a monarch, is honour; to serve such a *Rāj* is dignity.

"You are always to reside in the fort of Kāngrā; or, during necessary absences, you will leave your most trusty follower: be he your immediate *nāib*,[3] or who else, he must be a second self. His and your orders are, to hold the fortress against all comers, be they who they may, my son, minister, or servant; bear

[1] The Deity. [2] China. [3] Deputy.

they my *sunad* or not—*no one* gains admittance, not even myself, until thrice I have thrust my head in at the wicket, and thrice thou hast thyself examined my beard;[1] then, and then only, may the gate be opened. You are to keep an eye upon all neighbours, from Kashmīr to Belāspūr, apprizing the *faqīr* instantly of any movement at Jumnu, Nurpūr, or Mundi. If symptoms of disturbance arise in any quarter, or any opportunity offers for extending our influence, be watchful, and report; but in no way act, except in self-defence, without express orders; and then be not hasty, knowing that the royal mind may change, or affairs take a different turn. Much is not said, but you have penetration and will understand. My servants are wise and obedient, and it would be cruel to tempt them, by negligence, to be otherwise. Think not then that suspicion reigns in my breast; far otherwise; the *Surdārs* around Kāngrā are in especial favour; may they long continue to deserve it. Caution, however, and foresight prevent calamity. Bellasis, be prudent, be vigilant, be cautious."

[1] This is an order which Runjīt actually gave to one of his governors, and it is in conformity with his jealous, distrustful spirit.

Thus ended this strange epistle: it contained another in the ordinary character, being an order to the governor to give up the fort and territory of Kāngrā to the High-in-rank, the Favoured-of-the-Māharājah, the Well-wisher, the Valiant-in-battle, and the Wise-in-*Durbār*, Colonel Bellasis. The latter epistle was signed by Rājah Dhyān Singh, and another, much to the same effect, had the seal of Azīzūdīn. Both bore the Māharājah's signet and private marks; but my cipher had only the *faqīr's* name attached.

My time was busily occupied for the next week in preparation for my command. My success had been beyond my hopes; the office was an important one, but being in the hills much enhanced its value. Night and day was I now engaged, surrounded with *ommedwārs* with new levies, civil and military, horse and foot; every creature that could crawl considered himself entitled to serve me, and expect my favour; even Nand Singh was not above offering me a dozen recruits, from each of whom I doubt not he received a douceur of a month's pay. Every man who had seen me enter the town now considered himself as my friend; all who had spoken to me became my brothers; elephants and horses,

arms of all sorts, sabres of every price, from Damascus blades, that by the turn of a wrist could cut horizontally through an orange placed on the end of a spear, to eight-*ānna* blades of the Lāhor bazār; matchlocks as various, from the beautiful Sindhee barrels to the commonest trumpery; all were for sale around me, and my levies and *ommedwārs* were careering about, strutting and making the most of themselves in every garb and every manner.

But Chānd Khān was in especial feather; he considered me, as it were, his own; the child of his making; and almost against my will I took to him scarcely less kindly. He offered himself as my *naīb*; this I refused, but said he should remain as my *vaqīl* at the *durbār*, on the condition, however, of giving up his present questionable practices. He was an *honest* man, and followed the business more for the sport than the profit; he had therefore some difficulty in deciding whether he should serve the state or oppose it; he could not do both—be the servant of the Māharājah's servant, and an avowed robber. With many a sigh, he accepted my terms, I consenting to take into employ fifty of his countrymen, whom indeed I was glad to get, for they were all stout hands, well acquainted

with the country. Aliverdi Khān, the head of them, was a particularly smart, intelligent fellow, and did me good service.

Of Chānd Khān's inherent trustiness I had some slight doubts; but upon the whole he was much the man I wanted; he knew every body, and feared no one; was bold, and had been true to the salt of his former master; a good earnest of fealty to the new one. However, while ostensibly trusting him entirely, I took care to leave one of my own servants, a quiet, steady man, by name Morād Beg, to look after my *vaqil;* he was not to make acquaintance with Chānd Khān, but was simply to keep me apprised of his habits and haunts; mentioning how he generally passed his time, who were his associates, and what places he frequented.

To Chānd Khān I explained that he must regularly attend *durbār;* that, whether he had heard from me or not, he was daily to present my dutiful respects; that, beyond this, he was to be silent, give no opinions, and ask no questions; to appear as stupid as possible, but to have all his ears and eyes open. I told him that if he once deceived me, we parted; but that, if he faithfully served me, his stipulated pay should be but a small part of his profits; and that, for every definite piece of intelligence, he should be

separately paid, according to its value. In time of need, he was to send me any extra intelligence, at any cost; and for ordinary occasions, I was to station two *Hurkāras*[1] at every twenty *kōs*. I did not disguise from Chānd Khān that my aims were high, and he needed little argument to show that master and servant must rise or fall together.

I left with him money to buy over all who were to be bought; well knowing that the humming of a hundred insects is louder than the voice of one man, that any one about the court may reach any preferment, and that the most insignificant of those who have access to the palace may prove useful. Nand Singh I found associated with me, not only as major of the Lancers, but as deputy of the fort; and I was ordered always to keep a squadron of my regiment in the garrison. Runjīt, with all his apparent confidence, had jumped at this arrangement, on perceiving the sinister glances Nand Singh directed towards me on the day of his catastrophe. "'Tis well," said I to myself; "we'll try the fellow's metal."

Before the week was over, I had enlisted thirteen hundred men; my lancers mustered

[1] Messenger; generally, a bearer of despatches.

seven hundred, and Khushiyāl Singh's regiment eight hundred; I had besides six light guns, so that I made a formidable appearance as I moved to my first camp, a few miles beyond the city of Lāhor.

Before starting, I had been admitted to another interview with the Māharājah, who received me with great favour. As before, he asked many questions, seemed pleased at my understanding his dumb show, and drew me out to tell of the adventures I had seen. In return, he talked of his own early career, and told me I should come to the interview he was to have with the Governor-general of India at Rupar.

Before quitting the *durbār*, I had some specimens of justice in the Punjāb. A *bhāya*, or orderly, whom I had noticed as I passed through the street, helping himself and horse gratis, from a corn-chandler's shop, brought in a miserable creature, accused of stealing a melon from the garden. The culprit was ordered to be tethered like a horse, for a twelvemonth, and to be kept lying on his belly with his arms and legs at full stretch. Another man, accused of even some slighter offence, had his nose split.

A *Brāhman*, rushing into the presence in frantic tones, called for justice. With difficulty he was made to explain, that Sirdār Fattah Singh

Mān had seized the ten *bighas*[1] of land his family had held in *dharamarat*[2] for forty generations. His Highness's reply, that his case would be investigated, was so little satisfactory, that the complainant tore open his breast, and, before he could be stopped, had inflicted several deep gashes on his person; the man was one of a class called *Ch'huri mār*[3] who thus extort justice, and by such summary *dharna*[4] often gain their ends. The eventual fate of the *Brāhman* I never heard.

Scarce was the bleeding wretch disposed of, when the principal *Zumindārs*[5] of a district, against the renter of which a charge was wanted, were called in. Either there was no cause of complaint, or they had got their cue from the renter, for their evidence went to prove that even less than the assessment had been taken from them. This was a sad mistake in their

[1] A measure of land, containing 120 feet square.

[2] A religious endowment.

[3] Literally, strikers with the knife, men who, to extort arms or sympathy, gash themselves with knives, inflicting flesh wounds on their breasts and arms, and thus frightening lookers-on into compliance with their demands.

[4] A mode of extorting compliance by inflicting on oneself some injury, the guilt of which falls on the party refusing.

[5] Land-owner.

policy, and, to bring them to reason, one was ordered to stand on hot bricks. Runjīt, however, did not delight in witnessing pain, and let the man off in a few moments, mulcting the district, however, twenty thousand rupees, having already kept the poor creatures hanging off and on for four months. Perhaps my presence benefitted the prisoners, for his Highness was always anxious to show well before *faringīs*.

Before I got my dismissal, I was shown the crown jewels, and among them, the Koh-i-nur [1]; but all these things have been described so often, that I will pass them by. Altogether, the appearance of the Lion's Court was not what I expected: indeed I have seen more of state, as

[1] Literally, *mountain of light*. It is a diamond an inch and a half long, and an inch wide, that was the chief ornament of the "Peacock throne" of the Great Mogul; Nadir Shāh seized it when he plundered Delhi in 1783; and Ahmad Shāh Abdalli got possession of it in the scramble that succeeded Nadir's assassination; from him it descended to his son Taimur, and again to his sons as they successively seized the government. Shāh Shuja succeeded in carrying it with him in his exile; and in the year 1813, when in the Punjāb, supplicating for aid from the Sikh in the recovery of his kingdom, the latter ungraciously demanded the diamond, put many indignities on the fallen monarch and his family, and threatened even more, unless the jewel was given up to him; and by such conduct became its possessor.

well as of real dignity, among princes of much inferior rank. Runjīt himself was plainly dressed, generally wearing a green turban: and a rich pearl necklace was almost his only ornament. Hira Singh, a boy of about ten years old, and son to Dhyān Singh, sat always beside the Mahārājah, and was richly bedizened; a few of the younger courtiers were gaudily attired, and I have seen one of them wearing three pair of gold bracelets and three necklaces, besides rings, earrings, and jewelled dagger. But these were exceptions; and the usual Sikh attire, like the Hindū, is plain and unadorned.

This being in a manner a private visit, I did not receive a *khilat*, but the Māharājah, with his own hand, gave me a beautiful matchlock, saying it was true for eight hundred yards, "and if I judge rightly, Bellasis, it will have none but fair play in your hands." At this compliment, I observed one of the European officers twirl his moustache, and glances pass across the hall.

At this interview I was grave and reserved, which the Māharājah noticing, said, "Why, he seems as if under punishment!"

"No, your Highness," I replied; "but, when your servant first came into the presence, he had no responsibilities; he had but his good horse

to care for, and his sword to look to. The friendless has been exalted, and has now the cares and wants of many to think of, and, above all, he has your Highness's interests to watch."

"Wisely and well said, Bellasis; but your cares are premature; your foot is hardly yet in the stirrup; you need not yet affect the ruler."

I observed a sneer on more than one lip, and, with as haughty a look as I could assume, I glanced round the room and said: "Before his benefactor the servant is all humility; but even in the presence, the ravens envy the eagle."

"There are good men present, Bellasis," said Runjīt, evidently urging me on.

"Yes," said Tej Singh, a huge fellow, calling himself general, and nephew of Khushiyāl Singh, "many that could trample on an upstart horse-jockey, who, I'll be bound, had nothing better than an ass to ride in his own country."

A loud laugh was raised, in which I joined, and added:—"Even on such an animal I would put down an unwieldy boaster, and cram a spear down his throat, as easily as he would a *chupātī*."

The monster half rose, but the Māharājah bade him be still, and some of the leading *Sardārs*, among whom were Lena Singh Majitā, and

Atar Singh,[1] appeared annoyed at the fracas; the *faqīr* and Dhyān Singh, too, interfered to change the train of conversation; the *durbār* broke up, and I got my *rukhsat.* That evening Chānd Khān came to me with an air of great importance, and took an opportunity when we were alone of slipping a note into my hand, adding: — "The *sāhib* is, doubtless, aware that *Surdār* Lena Singh Majīta cannot be uninterested in the affairs of Kāngrā."

I reproved the *vaqīl* for allowing himself to be drawn from the strictly neutral position which I had assigned to him, but I was not displeased at the note itself, the purport of which was that I might find difficulties I little expected in taking possession of my fortress, but that in Lena Singh I had a friend at court. My new ally will be mentioned more at large hereafter; suffice it now to say that he was a mechanic and an astronomer, as well as a good soldier and

[1] The first of these *Surdārs* has some smattering of science, and is as much above his fellow-countrymen in respectability as in mechanical knowledge. The second is the son of Ammar Singh Sandāwalā, and a cousin of the Mahārajāh's. He is rather a respectable man for a Sikh, but his brother, Lena Singh, (not the person of the same name mentioned above as a superior man) is a noted drunkard, and their nephew, Ajit Singh, is a forward youth, of more pretension than power. As kinsmen of the royal family, they are looked up to at *durbār.*

a virtuous man. He was by far the best specimen of the Sikh *Surdārs*, and was much respected by all parties. Before setting out on my journey, or entering on the web of intrigue already weaving around my steps, I must digress for a few minutes, to give a slight outline of the extraordinary people among whom I had fallen; and in sketching them I shall borrow largely from Sir John Malcolm.

In A. D. 1469, Nānak Shāh, or Guru Nānak, the founder of the Sikh[1] sect, was born at Talwandī, on the banks of the Beyāh, (or Hyphasis); his father was a Hindū of the military caste, though engaged in business. The son refused to follow his father's employment, but turned all his thoughts to religion, and at an early age travelled into every part of the East, conversing with all ranks, and even disputing with the Emperor Bābar. The grounds of his doctrine were the Unity and Omnipresence of God; and his object was to show both Musalmāns and Hindūs that they were equally in error. He died, and was buried at Kartapūr on the Rāvī. The precepts of Nānak and of his two successors were collected by the fourth Guru, Arjammal, into the *Adhū Granth*, or first book of the Sikhs'

[1] The word means a disciple, a scholar, from the word *sikhna*, to learn.

holy writings. By this work Arjammal brought himself into notice, and incurred suspicion. He was imprisoned and put to death by the Mahommedan authorities, in A.D. 1606. His murder roused his followers, and persecution ensued, which worked out its usual consequences. The hitherto peaceful Sikhs united themselves under Hor Govind, the son of their murdered leader, into a band bent on vengeance.

Hur Govind, and his grandson who succeeded him, passed a life of persecution, and were soldiers more than priests. The Delhi empire was then in its zenith, and the Sikhs were but a handful. Nānak, to conciliate the Mahommedans, had forbidden hog's-flesh to his followers; but Hur Govind made all flesh except that of the cow lawful; he studied in every way to make his followers hardy, and inure them to fatigue. Upon his death, the succession was disputed, and between internal dissentions and Moslem persecution, the sect was nearly exterminated: when, after one or two intervening priesthoods, the Guru Teg *Bahādar*[1] was put to

[1] This name signifies "*Lord of the Sword;*" an appellation which gave offence to Aurungzeb, who desired the Guru to adopt some other name. The leader refused, saying:—"You will find that my son will verify the title, and conquer by the sword." And so he did, transforming the meek and oppressed *Sikhs* into the bold and oppressive *Singhs*.

death, and left to his son Govind, A.D. 1675, a heritage of revenge, which, boy as he was, he took up. He acquired the fort of Anandpūr Mākiwāl on the Sutlej, and made fundamental changes in the Sikh policy; for whereas Nānak interfered little with the civil institutions of the Hindūs, Guru Govind declared all men equal; and some of the sweeper caste who had brought his father's corpse from Delhi were rewarded with high rank and employment. Their descendants are now known as Rangrātā Singhs.

Govind likewise changed the designation of his followers from Sikh to Singh, which means lion; thus setting an object of ambition before the very scum of the earth. He desired that they should be all soldiers, wear blue, and carry steel; on meeting, their watchword was to be :—"Wāh, Guru-jī *ke khālsa!* Wāh, Guru-jī *ke fatteh!*" He instituted the Guru Māt, or grand council at Amritsir, and wrote the *Dūsma Grānth*, which tells of his exploits, as well as expounds the law: he made many gallant stands against the Emperor of Delhi's officers, and particularly defended Chamkaur[1] to extremity. His eventual fate is wrapped in mystery.

[1] A considerable town on the south bank of the Sutlej. The confederated Sikhs, after they had sacked Surhind in 1763, gave it in free tenure to the Sodis, who are the descendants of Guru Govind.

Guru Govind was the tenth and last acknowledged leader of the Sikhs, and is looked on as the originator of their political greatness. But Bāndā, one of his devoted followers, taking advantage of the troubles that followed Aurungzeb's death in A.D. 1707, after several petty successes, ventured to encounter Faujdār Khān, Governor of Surhind, who was hated by the Sikhs as the murderer of Govind's children. Bāndā was the victor, and sacked Surhind, destroying all, of every sex and age, who would not become Sikhs; he defiled the mosques, and, leaving Surhind a heap of ruins, overran the whole country to the Jumna. Even Sahāranpūr did not entirely escape him, and he only stopped at Pānīpūt, from whence he retired, and afterwards defeated the viceroy of Lāhor. Eventually he was hemmed in, in the fort of Loghād, under the hills north-east of Lāhor, and there starved into surrender, sent to Delhi, and cruelly put to death.

The Sikhs consider Bāndā as a heretic, though a brave leader. He tried, though unsuccessfully, to introduce many changes; the Akālīs[1] opposed

[1] Literally, immortals (or without death), the title of what may be called the Knight-errants among the Sikhs. They are a class who devote themselves to watch the holy tank at Amritsir, and to defend with their lives the Sikh religion against all innovators; they are dissolute and insolent, but are

his innovations; and, as defenders of the faith, have since arrogated to themselves the exclusive right of wearing the blue turban and attire. On Bāndā's death, the Moslems waged a war of extermination against the Sikhs; all who escaped fled to the hills north-east of Lāhor, and remained almost forgotten for thirty years, until Nādir Shah's invasion, when they plundered those who fled from him. When the victor returned from Delhi, laden with spoil, the Sikhs hung on his rear, and got a rich booty. On Nādir's death, taking advantage of the weakness of Lāhor, they issued from their fastnesses, recruited, and carried their arms through the Punjāb, till they repossessed themselves of Amritsir.

The Sikhs had followed Bāndā as a military leader, but Govind was their last Guru; and after him they were governed by their own immediate Surdārs, great and small, strong and weak; a constitution that could only have been held together by the external pressure of persecution. At the Guru Māt, however, a leader was always elected, and rank and influence there, as else-

tolerated by the government for the sake of their furious courage, which, especially when excited by opium, has on several occasions done good service to their sect.

where, had their weight; common danger united them; oppression, thirst of vengeance, and the distractions of their enemies, were all links in the chain of their confederacy.

The first Afghān eruption, A.D. 1746, benefitted their cause; they took advantage of it to seize the Jalandar Doāb; they were kept in check, however, by Mīr Manū, the governor of Lāhor, who was only prevented from pressing them harder by the influence of a Sikh in his service. His *Nāib* and successor, Adīna Beg, encouraged the Sikhs for his own purposes, and as a check to the Afghāns.

Ahmad Shāh Abdāllī, enraged at their daring, and at the countenance they received from Delhi, invaded India, resolved on their punishment. The Sikhs avoided coming to an engagement, but hung on his baggage. On his return to Kābūl, Ahmad left his son Taimur to chastise them; and he took Amritsir, defiled their temples, and filled up their holy tank. These outrages exasperated the Sikhs, who rose *en masse*, drove him out of the Punjāb, and triumphed so far that one of their rulers even took Lāhor, and coined rupees with the impression of "Khālsāh-jī." Their former friend, Adīna Beg Khān, was now glad to call in the Mahrāthās to recover from the Sikhs his Subā of

Lāhor; and these new allies, under Rāgonāth Rāo, after taking Surhind, swept like a tempest as far as the Atak, dispossessing both Afghāns and Sikhs of Lāhor and the other towns. The troubles in the south soon recalled the Mahrāthās, who left Adīna Beg as their governor at Lāhor. He died within a few months, and the Sikhs again seized the capital.

Ahmad Shāh, after his victory at Pānīpūt, once more endeavoured to subdue the Sikhs, and drove them before him from one end of the Punjāb to the other, and took Armitsir, razing its walls, and again filling up its sacred tank. He made pyramids of Sikh heads, and washed with their blood the mosques they had polluted; but, on his return to Kābūl, they attacked and drove out his governors, seized Lāhor, and destroyed the mosques he had just purified. The same scenes were enacted the following year. Ahmad Shāh again took Lāhor, and the Sikhs again took advantage of his retiring to retake it; and, as long as he lived, continued to molest his troops, rarely coming to a battle, but actively and perseveringly galling them, and themselves flying to the hills, when hard pressed.

The anarchy that followed the death of Ahmad, and the even greater weakness of the Delhi throne, gave the Sikhs ample opportunity

to subdue the Punjāb, and consolidate their power. What they ascribe to their own institutions and courage is mainly attributable to this decay of the empires on either side. Their religious system, attractive as it was to low-born Hindūs, never found much favour with the higher castes, or with the Mahamedans; and their policy of having every village chief his own master, carried in itself the elements of dissolution. Had an enemy appeared, or had not a master spirit arisen among themselves, they would doubtless have sunk into insignificance; for even now, after years of unbroken prosperity, their numbers are quite insignificant, and I doubt whether the whole Punjāb contains a quarter of a million of Sikhs; the chief part of them are to be found in the Mānjah[1] about Amritsir and Lāhor, and among the *Surdārs* and court retainers. A Sikh cultivator is rarely seen, most

[1] The name of the tract between the rivers Ravī and Byah, from whence the Sikhs originally sprung, spreading abroad as their arms prevailed. It has frequently happened that one small village of fifty or a hundred ploughs has furnished two or three *Surdārs;* men who joined the ranks with only a horse and a spear, and have in a few years carved out for themselves principalities. Much to their credit, these soldiers of fortune have not been ashamed of their origin, but generally retain the name of their native village as an affix to their own name, and as a family mark.

of that occupation being Hindūs or Musalmāns, the former being, perhaps, as two to one, and the Musalmāns prevailing to the westward. I should loosely estimate the population of the Punjāb at about a quarter of a million of Sikhs, half a million of Musalmāns, and three quarters of a million of Hindūs.

The whole system of the Sikhs is unfavourable to the multiplication of their race; continual feuds must cut off great numbers, and their habits are uncongenial to fruitfulness; there probably is not a more dissolute[1] race on the face of the earth; and though, by their active habits, some do live to good old age, yet most are childless, and a large family is never found: they all drink, and eat *bhāngh* and opium. A large proportion of the troops are Hindū and Musulmān, either in separate corps, or mixed up with Sikhs; indeed, Runjīt Singh very wisely cares less for

[1] A curious illustration of this remark is, that Rājah Suchet Singh has been three times married, and has no children; while his brothers, who have each been four times married, have each but two sons: those of Dhyān Singh being the well known Hirā Singh, and Jowāhir Singh; those of Gulāb Singh were Udam Singh, killed by the fall of a gateway, when Nāo Nihāl also perished, and Jowāhir Singh, now alive. Dhyān Singh, indeed, is said to have had more than one daughter, who, according to the laws of his tribe, perished immediately after birth.

caste and country than for good legs and shoulders. His infantry, when I joined, amounted to perhaps thirty-five thousand; with as many cavalry, of all classes, and sixty guns. The first are steady on parade, and good-looking men, but manœuvre slowly; the cavalry are ill-mounted, and inferior to almost any I have seen. The guns[2] are badly got up, and there does not seem an efficient artilleryman among them; against an European enemy, they would, after the first discharge, be only an incumbrance, and would probably induce defeat. Runjīt himself estimates his troops pretty fairly, and has directed them against the weak points of his frontier, obeying the least hint from the British agent at Ludīanā, and counting the territory south of the Sutlej as his own, only by the sufferance of the English. Perhaps there is no stronger proof of his judgment than that, in twenty-three years, no quarrel should have arisen between him and them, intimately mixed as is his territory with the states under their protection.

[2] Good judges hold an opinion different from Bellasis; but, having more than once narrowly inspected the Sikh guns, horses and harness, and having talked with their artillery officers and privates, my opinion is, that the Mahrāthā artillery was better appointed and more efficient than the Sikh is.

I now return to my own personal narrative. The day after my last audience, I set out on my journey, the order of march being, a squadron of lancers in front; next, Khushiyāl Singh's regiment; then the guns; after them, my new levies; and the body of lancers under Nand Singh bringing up the rear.

For some days all went smoothly; I admired the careless good-humour of the Sikhs, and was surprised at my deputy's suddenly improved air and demeanour. He would often come up, and respectfully ride by my side, or a little behind me, most zealously conducing to my comfort, and obviating every possible trouble. The good-humour of the men was extreme, though somewhat damped by my prohibiting plunder, and ordering every thing to be paid for. As soon as we reached our ground, the men, horse and foot, scattered themselves over the country, often going several miles for forage, and renewing the march next morning with as much alacrity as if they had slept all day. "Good material," said I, "for an army; only wanting good pay and good leaders to make you crack fellows."

As we advanced, Nand Singh's attentions increased; two or three dark-looking fellows of his were constantly at my elbow. I did not like their looks, but they were smart and active,

and forestalled all my wants. Of an evening, I usually wandered forth with a gun over my shoulder; and now, as we approached the low hills, my trips were longer and more frequent, sometimes prolonged till after nightfall. Ali Verdi Khān, and my own *Pesh Khidmat*,[1] Hussan Ali, took me to task for this. "Does not the *sāhib* see what scoundrels there are about the camp? There are a hundred that would shoot you for the bit of lace on your cap, and a thousand for your gun. Besides, you are not without enemies; and we have of late observed your steps watched."

I laughed, and said, "This rifle and pair of good bull-dogs would do for half a dozen, not to speak of my sword; and *you* count yourselves something."

"True, *sāhib*, we do," and one stroked his beard, and the other twisted his whiskers. "Yes, *sāhib*, we are not either of us Sikhs; but still, it is not wise to act thus; the best beloved have enemies, and few are so considerate as to give notice when they mean to attack." I so far listened to advice as to permit four of Ali Verdi's Multānīs to follow me on horseback at a little distance, but I did not give up my sport.

[1] Head servant, or one in waiting.

One evening we had shot a hog-deer, a florican, and some black partridge; and at sun-set turned campwards. We had mounted, and had five miles of tangled, uneven ground to cross, with two deep, raviny *nālās*. We had passed the first, and, in the second, not more than half a mile from camp, there was about two feet of water; the banks were lined with brushwood, about a man's height, through which we had carefully picked our way, for it was now dark. The Multānīs had closed up, and we were in all nine persons; when in the middle of the stream, a volley of fifteen or twenty matchlocks opened upon us, at a distance of not above thirty yards from both flanks, on the side to which we were going.

"Spread out, men, and push across: do not fire, but have at the dogs with your *tulwārs*," was my cry, as I heard the balls whistling about my ears. We dashed across before they could reload, but the ruffians threw themselves into the brushwood, and, though we beat about, we could not dislodge one. The next best thing to catching them was to push home, and see after this matter.

"Shove on, my lads! But how stand we? No one hurt, I hope?" My followers gathered round

at my voice, but I found we only mustered seven. "Ha? who is missing?"

"Rāmjān, the Mūltanī, and Hussan Ali," cried several voices at once.

"Hasten back to the *nālā*, then, and look for them; perhaps our delay may cost their lives!"

As we returned, a horse, wild with terror, tried to rush past us, nearly breaking our ranks: it was the Mūltānī's, who with a death-grasp clung to the animal. In the dim light, we did not at first perceive the rider, but, seizing hold of the reins, discovered that the poor fellow had been shot through the head, and had fallen forwards, convulsively throwing his arms round the horse, when his sharp, unoccupied, stirrups, dangling against the animal, urged him forward. The sudden stop brought the lifeless burden to the ground, and we found, to our sorrow, that he was quite dead. Hussan Ali had been more fortunate; his horse was shot, and had reared and fallen over with him; the friendly stump of a tree saved him from worse inconvenience than the temporary imprisonment and a good wetting. We helped him out of the *nālā*, left two of our party to watch the corpse till we could send a *chārpaī* for it, and pushed on for camp; but before we arrived we were met by lights, *masāls*,

and hundreds of wild figures, in every degree of disarray, shouting and yelling like fiends. The volley, sharp and loud, was carried by the wind; and coming at such an hour from the direction I was in, caused more than suspicion; the bugle sounded to arms, and, in less time than a regiment of European cavalry would take to bit their horses, my jolly fellows were bearing towards me. The wild and hearty shouts that greeted my advance were very grateful to me, but there was little time for words.

"Follow me to my tent, men! Order a muster of the lancers; and you, Ali Verdi Khān, turn out Wāhāb and Khairāt Ali, the trackers, and return to the ford; tell them I'll give five hundred rupees for every man that they prove concerned."

"Good, my lord; your servant is ready."

In a few minutes the lancers were paraded by torch-light; most seemed, and expressed themselves, delighted at my return, though they hardly understood why I so scrutinized their countenances, and Nand Singh fretted at my suspicions. All were present except one, Mahammed Shāh, a peculiar favourite of the Major's, and one who of late had been much about me. His absence was readily explained by three or four comrades, who said that he, with them,

had been out foraging, but that his horse, being a little lame, had lagged behind.

"And where is your nag, Mohar Singh?" said I to a raw-boned Sikh, who looked rather foolish, standing in his place.

"Was it not reported instantly," exclaimed Nand Singh, "that the poor fellow's horse died of a fit of the gripes, as we came up to our ground to-day?"

"It is that which makes you look so blown, my man, is it? Ah, well—Major, send Mahammed Shāh to me as soon as he comes up."

In about an hour the man presented himself; his horse looked fresh, but out of condition;—"You do not," said I, "look after him; if you lose your horse, you'll lose your service." I said no more, for at a glance I perceived that the animal was none of his own, but a rip belonging to Nand Singh, lent for the occasion. My suspicions were more than confirmed; however, I ordered a distribution of sweetmeats and a halt the next day, in reward of the ready interest of the troops in my behalf.

Though I said nothing, Ali Verdi Khān and Hussan Ali, and some of the lancers too, were not slow in asserting that the attack had been planned by Nand Singh. "Did we not see him whispering to that huge Sikh who lost his horse

in the skirmish? and to that little blackguard, Mahammed Shāh, who is a devil incarnate? It was not an hour before you started that they were talking together. And do you not remember that in the morning Nand Singh recommended you to go in that direction for game; but advised you not to fire till you had crossed the second *nālā*.[2] This morning some wild, shaggy-looking fellows, who have been hanging about the camp, were seen by Sufdar Khān, who was with the advance: about two hours before we arrived, they took the direction of the hills."

"Well, my good friends, thanks for your zeal, but be silent, or you will do me harm. I am awake, quite awake, but we must make sure before we strike."

During the day, Ali Verdi returned; he brought the heron's feather of a trooper's plume. None such were in my cap, but the lancers wore them. This was found among the prints of many feet on one flank of the *ghāt*,[1] where there were also tracks of a horse's feet. Ali Verdi had, with Wāhāb, followed these traces a mile a long the *nālā*; the shoes were inverted, but this did not for a moment deceive the old *Khojī*,[2] who

[1] Landing-place, pass, ascent. [2] Tracker.

observed that it only made the hind feet appear to go before the fore ones. They then turned, and joined Khairāt Ali, who was leisurely following similar tracks on the other side of the *nālā*, where, after keeping the bank for a short distance, they had returned, and attempted to keep in their own footsteps. It seemed that the presence of a horse had put them out, and that after the first few yards they had thrown him down, lashed his legs together, and carried him on their shoulders, to avoid detection from his foot-prints. When they reached the *ghāt*, they rightly thought that amid so much trampling it would be difficult to trace them; but, though beyond the *ghāt*, the men's tracks were detected, there was no further trace of the horse; and the men evidently wore, to disguise their foot-prints, web shoes, formed with the heel both fore and aft; so that none but an experienced hand, who could detect the comparative pressure left by the weight of the hind and fore part of the foot, could have told which way the party went. Ali Verdi left the *Khojīs* with every hope of a successful pursuit.

The next morning I renewed the march, leaving Ali Verdi with a hundred men to aid the trackers, and both money and promises to expedite their movements. There was something

kindly and frank in the man, that took me from the first, and I could not have deputed a trustier hand.

The attack was duly reported at *durbār*, as an unforeseen and ill understood affair, the work probably of a party of Kozāks,[1] on whose track we now were, and would soon report further.

Nothing further of note occurred, until we reached Kāngrā, on approaching which I mustered all my diplomacy, anticipating that I should not easily effect an entrance, although armed with a royal *furmān*,[2] and backed by a large body of troops. However, I was not wont to distrust myself; I called a halt when within one march of the fort, and sent on my *Pesh-khidmat* with a courteous letter to the governor, enclosing copies of the open *purwānās*. I took the opportunity to inspect my followers, and was agreeably surprised to find no symptom of fatigue among them; the horses seemed even improved; and, small as they were, I never saw such hardy, active creatures. One of them had particularly attracted my attention. He was a little bay, scarcely higher than a pony; his

[1] Banditti. [2] Mandate.

master, Hākim Singh,[1] a trooper in the lancers, was one of my orderlies, and the fellow seemed perfectly ubiquitous; he was always *hāzir*,[2] always ready to gallop off at my bidding, and the little nag appeared always as ready as his master.

During the day an answer came from Kāngrā, very much what I expected:—"The honour is very great; nothing could please Colonel Dandāwar Singh better than to yield place to so great a *Bāhādar*[3] as myself; but then he was

[1] More than one such pony and rider have I seen, outdoing the powers even of the steeds that bore about "heavenly Una" and other damosels errant,

> "Whose milk-white palfreys scorning grass,
> Just crop a rose-leaf as they pass."

I have seen a little wiry nag thus carry about a heavy man, neither party seeming to know what rest, food, or water meant. The mischief is that a European, purchasing one of these gifted animals, finds the spell broken, and his pony wanting all the care that common ponies require. However, I know of one officer's pony which, during the late war, carried a pair of heavy boxes, with bedding, and a man sitting on the top, from Khelat-i-Gilji to Mokhoor, seventy-six miles, in twenty-eight hours, including three for rest: the whole burthen was estimated at four maunds, or 320 pounds. The owner of this wonderful pony rode in company with it, and neither of the horses nor riders suffered; the animals were of the Kozāk breed from beyond Kivā.

[2] Ready, present, alert. [3] Lord.

strictly enjoined by the Māharājah to admit no one, not even his son, no, nor himself, till after certain preliminaries; think, then, most excellent *sāhib*, whether I could disobey such an order? You will, therefore, favour your servant by withdrawing your troops from Kāngrā territory."

By no means daunted, I sent off Capt Fareḥ Khān, with a squadron of horse, and two hundred select infantry, bearing a note from me to the following effect — "Dandāwar Singh is a wise man, a faithful servant, and a good soldier; his fame is well known. His friend would fain emulate him and gain a like renown. But, bearing the Māharājah's order, given in open *durbār*, Colonel Bellasis would have his face for ever blackened, were he to return without executing his commission. The wise Dandāwar Singh will therefore understand that duty cannot be set aside; but, appreciating his merits, Colonel Bellasis wishes that the transfer of Kāngrā should be made with all courtesy, and in the manner most grateful to its present gallant governor. As the latter has been long absent from the presence, and may not understand the improvements of the day, his servant, in the way of friendship, sends him a shell, a specimen of those received from the English, and adapted

to the guns now here, which can be pointed in such a way as to send the shell to the top of the highest hill, even to the clouds. By means of a match in a hole in the shell, and which is just such a length as to last till it reaches its destination, the missile is blown to atoms, scattering its death-dealing contents around. Perhaps my friend might like to see the experiment tried; if so, a couple of my guns are at his service."

Neither my kindness nor my polite hint had any effect; I therefore moved my camp to a convenient position beyond range of the fort, and rode about to look out for a weak point; but I found the place well supplied within itself, stronger in every way than I had anticipated, occupied by a garrison of greater strength than the whole force under me, and headed by one of the ablest of Gulāb Singh's officers; for the governor was but his creature, and, on my departure for Lāhor, had been reinforced with men and supplies, and ordered by his master to hold the place to the last extremity.

Kāngrā had been often attacked, but never taken: the Gurkhās, after remaining before it for twelve months, had eventually raised the siege; it was only by capitulation that it fell into the hands of the Sikhs; and it has always, with reason, been considered as their strongest

fortress. It stands on a hill, and on three sides it is surrounded by the Bān Gungā, a river at all times breast-deep; on the fourth side it is separated from another projecting hill, called Jaintī Mātā, by a deep dell, half a *kōs* wide. Could I, in the face of the garrison, have effected a lodgment by the *Devi-stān*,[1] on the summit of the Jaintī Mātā, the sanctity of the place would have aided me; but the range, I saw, was too long for my light guns. Understanding too, from my spies, that the garrison was not only victualled for years, but that in its tank and springs it was free from the usual deficiency of hill forts, I saw no chance of success, except in a *coup de main*; and that I resolved on the very next night.

Accordingly, in the evening, I moved my guns towards Jantī Mātā, and detached a party in the direction of each of the two gates that looked that way, and I purposed, according to the expedient so often successfully tried by the English, to affect intending to blow them in; for the ascents, though steep, would not, for Europeans at least, be supposed by the garrison to be im-

[1] A temple, or literally a station of the Goddess Debei. The history and description of Kāngrā aim at fidelity: it was besieged as here described, and ultimately fell to the Sikhs much in the manner stated by the *Rānī* in the fifth chapter.

practicable. The guns, however, were merely to take up such a position as would enable them to throw shells into Kote Kāngrā, while two select parties, of 500 men each, were to take the bull by the horns, and, crossing the river at different points, were to make the assault at midnight. The signal was to be given by the guns in the opposite direction; and, by a chain of small parties all round the hill (a circuit of five *kōs*), keeping up as heavy a fire as possible, while the two real attacks moved up silently, I had great hopes, amid the distraction and surprise, to effect an entrance.

All was arranged, and a reward of a thousand rupees, with promotion on the spot, was promised to the man who should be first within the works; when, just before nightfall, a horseman, whose fine sinewy steed's convulsive sobs told what exertions had been made by the rider, dashed into the camp, shewed the Māharājah's *misal*, and craved passage into the fort. He passed, entered, and, before an hour, a message arrived from the governor that at dawn the gates should be opened.

CHAPTER IV.

The rich man's wealth is his stronghold — Some hints on the chase, for the gentlemen of Melton Mowbray—Give up a point if you wish to *gain it*.

I must now return to what has been going on at court, and will let Chānd Khān tell his own story; slightly clipping his letter of its flowers and other redundancies.

"Your Excellency; after the departure of your radiant presence, the light of Lāhor became darkness, the Māharājah opened not his mouth, and the *durbār* was silent; your enemies, however, insinuated themselves into the royal ear, and soon assailed your well-wishers. The Lord of favour,[1] however, judged right: the Māharājah is an appreciator of merit, and bade

[1] This translation does not sound nearly so euphonious as the original "*Khudāwand-i-niāmat*," which is a favourite oriental hyperbole for addressing a superior, as is Chānd Khān's second phrase, "appreciator of merit," or "*kadardān*."

my lord's detractors be silent. Soon came in reports of the excellent discipline of the march, of the unheard-of moderation of the troops, of the regular and orderly manner in which you passed through cities and towns, avoiding crops; or, where unavoidably injuring, giving immediate remuneration;[1] the Māharājah was pleased, and my lord's enemies hid their faces.

"Then came the report of the vile attack on my lord. The Māharājah was enraged, and some of the councillors could scarcely conceal their chagrin. The minister and others (whom my lord knows) affected it was all a pretence of yours; then came other reports, and it even reached the presence, that Kāngrā would not open its gates.

"The Māharājah that day (it was the 11th day of the month Sufar) suddenly turned to the Rājah and said, '*Rājājī*, it is long since we have visited your *jāgīrs*[2] or enjoyed your hospitality:

[1] A practice almost entirely peculiar to the British in India, and hardly credible to the Natives, who are accustomed to look on any encampment, from that of an army to that of an individual, as a scourge of greater or less violence; to be endured, like a flight of locusts or an earthquake.

[2] A rent-free tenure, on terms of military service, the holder having to furnish a specified quota of troops, when required, or for regular service: *jāgīrs* differ in this respect from religious endowments, which are granted for the support of a holy man or family, or the repairs of a tomb.

order the train; to-morrow we propose to march that way. No excuses, the season I know is hot, and the distance is great; but, by the blessing of Gurujī,[1] the places are cool, and when reached, will repay the fatigues of the journey. Order General Court, with his own and Khushiyāl Singh's brigade, to attend; see that all is ready by the third watch of the night—let the *pesh khāna*[2] proceed immediately.'

"'*Be chashm*,'[3] and the Rājah withdrew. There was a slight curl on his highness's mouth, but he did not speak as if disturbed, and immediately proceeded with other business. I kept my place, silent as usual, and soon three or four others followed the Rājah; when he returned, they, too, followed. After some short delay, and when he had stated that the preparations had all been ordered, he said, in his usual soft and winning way: 'I am the *Surkār's*[4] slave, all I have is his, he has raised me from the dust: this journey

[1] The spiritual founder of the Sikhs, mentioned in the preceding chapter as Nānak Shāh, or Guru Nānak; Shāh means Saint as well as King; and Guru may be translated Priest, and *jī* signifies *Sir*, or rather the French *Monsieur*, and is applied in addition to any other title; "Monsieur L'Evêque" is perhaps the truest rendering of Gurujī for European ears.

[2] A tent, sent in advance of the camp.

[3] Be it upon my eyes.

[4] Government, applied to the head of the government.

will cost money; let the servant be permitted to pay the expenses, as he is to have the honour of the royal visit; my *jāgīr*, and those of my brothers, have been more than usually productive this year: let your servants then offer these nine *lākhs* of rupees as a *peshkush*[1] to the throne;' and as he spoke, *bānghi*[2] after *bānghi* of ducats and of rupees was brought into the presence; it was more than the Māharājah could stand, his eyes literally feasted on the heaps of treasure.

"'Mishr Benī Rām! Eh Mishrjī, see the money counted, and that the coin is all of the true sicca.'[3]

"'Has your highness any commands for your excellent servant, the faithful Bellasis?' said the Rājah, 'for I am despatching a trusty messenger, desiring him to lose no time in acquainting the presence of his having entered on his important charge.'

"'Yes, tell him to seek a cool shady spot for our pavilion; not that we now think we shall go just yet in these excessive heats, but lest there should be cause for our moving eastward.' The Rājah stepped from the *durbār*, and in an instant

[1] Present, offering, tribute.

[2] A bamboo placed across the shoulder, and a load suspended at either end.

[3] Sterling.

a horseman, whose steed had for some minutes stood chafing at the doorway, dashed like lightning across the plain. The riddle needs no reading to my lord, and I doubt not ere this reaches, Kāngrā will have been won; but mind, my lord, the nine lākhs will be laid at your door. For one day, and one only, the Rājah was your friend; from that day he disliked you; your appointment increased that dislike, and you may now reckon on his undying hate[1]; no small matter in truth; but let the matter of it induce caution; be always armed and attended, and allow no unknown person with arms in his hand to approach your person. Thy servant will watch the court, and report—what more need be said?"

I liked the style of Chānd Khān's communi-

[1] The reader will please to remember, in this and other passages, *who* is the speaker. Rāja Dhyān Singh might possibly have disliked a man without instigating or even desiring his assassination, though Chānd Khān makes him do both. A great man is not necessarily party to all the deeds and thoughts into which a rude villain may drag his name. The Quarterly Reviewer, who makes John Knox cognizant of, and consenting to, the murder of Darnley, because the perpetrators of that deed inserted the reformer's name in a list they furnished to an English privy councillor, would have made a capital judge in a tribunal for the resumption of rent-free tenures, where the claims of the legal evidence is often exactly in proportion to the *moral* proofs, the opposite way.

cation, and did not dislike its contents; it was clear to me I was in a heavy sea, but I feared not the breakers, and, indeed, never reckoned on court favour without its concomitant court intrigue and minion hatred; I was therefore well content to proceed on my way, and, strange and unaccountable as it might appear, to do my duty to the sovereign of my election, and to the people over whom he had placed me.

The same messenger that had entered the fort brought the above note, and trebly content with it, the fort's proposed surrender, and my own virtuous resolve, I threw myself on a *chārpaī*, and, in a dream of future prosperity, I slept till the morning star appeared. A few short minutes sufficed for the hasty ablution, and the slight personal decoration that I was used to apply, when I galloped round my lines, visited my picquets, found them alert, and returned to my tent; I sent for my *Surdārs*, and gave orders against any possible treachery. However, none was offered, and shortly after sun-rise we were masters of the strongest fort in the Punjāb.[1]

No sooner had my troops taken possession of

[1] Strictly speaking, Kāngrā is not in the Punjāb; that term only applying to the tract included between the rivers Jelum, Chenāb, Rāvī, Byāh, and Sutlej, which constitute the Punjāb, or five waters.

the works, and the different parts had been occupied, than I was curious enough to visit the points on which I had meditated the attack. My predecessor had been hitherto doing the honours of the fort, and still stood by me; while I, with as much nonchalance as possible, hung over the frightful abysses up which the mountain sheep could scarcely find a footing. For a time he said nothing, but when I had finished my examination in both directions, he remarked significantly, "Well, *sāhib*, and what do you think? Could the Multānī have managed it? or those stout little Gurkha fellows, so many of whom I see among the ranks—do you think they could have scaled such a steep in the face of my poor followers?"

"What does my friend mean?" observed I, innocently.

"Ah, the *sāhibs* are wise, very wise, but the Sikhs have ears too, most excellent sir; and truly, had you attempted the escalade, few of your brave troops would have seen their homes again. Kāngrā has many a source of strength that meets not the eye; these loose stones, that form the breastwork, need only to be unloosed to destroy the army of a Sikunder[1]; but these failing, you

[1] Alexander the Great, under the name of Sikundar or Si-

observe we stand on but an outpost, which, by the pouring down of rocks from above, could be crushed, annihilated in an instant; and then, where would have been my thousands of brave boys that were behind them, with their sharp ringing juzails,[1] their long matchlocks, and their twanging bows? But sooth, noble colonel, I prefer we should have met as friends; for though the hand of Dandāwar Singh knows what war is in all its forms, his heart has no pleasure in blood, and delights not in slaughter."

"Truly," rejoined I; "it would have been an onslaught to have been dreaded, prepared as you seem to have been; and as my friend says, peace at all times is preferable to war; and between servants of the same lord how much the more urgent!"

Before evening, the gallant old Sikh had moved below with all his garrison; he had been governor for several years, and I felt for his humiliation even in the exultation of my own success.

kundar Beg, is familiarly known all over the East. He and Rūstam (Hercules) are the heroes, or rather demi-gods of Western Asia.

[1] A wall-piece or swivel, mounted on a tripod; it is used in the field; a gun of nearly the same size and construction, mounted on a camel's back, is called a Zamburak.

I now occupied myself day and night in getting acquainted with my people of all degrees; with examining the country, its passes and its fells, its weak and its strong points; and for whole days, leaving my trustiest in charge of the garrison, would I wander over the hills, try every footpath, and investigate the minutest features of my extensive and important charge. My followers were astonished; accustomed to see other *Surdārs* lolling on their *chārpaīs* from morning until night, or listlessly and half reclining attend to their business for the first few hours of the day; then sleep; then, with all parade and show, at footpace, on horseback, or in a *tonjan*,[1] proceed for a mile or two; my never-ceasing bodily and mental activity astonished them, and often would they ask what was its use? what its end? why I did not enjoy myself?

"Get married, *sāhib*,"[2] said an old hoary-

[1] A chair carried on poles.

[2] This foregoing passage is a pretty fair picture of eastern officials, and their usual spirit; working for working's sake, or to fulfil a duty, is out of their range of ideas. The acquisition of wealth and power is the object of exertion, and when the end is gained, why continue the labour? Business can be done by menials, and the profits still reach the chief, directly or indirectly, either by participation, or by a well-applied squeeze to the deputy when full of the gains of iniquity. Of course I

headed fellow to me one day, "get married and enjoy life."

"Yes, but I am a poor man."

"Poor! and why so? why not do as others do? why slave? what's the use? no one will thank you, no one reward; the Māharājah will think you have an evil design, that you perhaps aim at popularity and independence, and the Amils[1] will vilify you for acting so contrary to themselves. Be moderate, at least; the bow too tightly drawn, returns not to its strength; take things easier, and you'll last the longer."

I laughed and said, "Your advice is friendly, and by no means bad, but men's natures are different; mine directs me, as that of other

speak generally; there are exceptions, and among them was the very person who made me the speech here recorded, some ten years ago; this was Hukīm Mehndi Ali Khān, the late Vazīr of Oude; even to old age he was active in mind and body, would take long rides in the morning, and attend minutely to his business during the day. He was a clear-seeing and able old man, not untainted by the corruption around him, but answering to the idea of a good oriental despot, reckless what road he took to obtain power, but, when obtained, using it justly and energetically.

[1] Abbreviation of Amaldār, and meaning a ruler, usually an intendant of finance: among the natives he is the civil chief of a district or province, sometimes armed with military authority, sometimes not; such rulers are often called Dewān, or Nāzim.

men leads them; the result is in the hands of God."

My adviser made that peculiar sound, like a "*cluck!*" which indicates surprise or incredulity; and shaking his head replied, "The *sāhib* is a wise man in his eccentricity."

Thus did I proceed somewhat irregularly, but always stirring. When not in the field, or actively abroad, I would rise before the dawn, saunter about the works; then, shortly after sunrise, hold my *durbār*, which, with a quarter of an hour's interval for breakfast, kept me till midday. My accounts with the *raīyats*, all police matters, were then discussed and settled. At midday I was in the practice of retiring, if indeed it can be called retirement, to withdraw to an apartment without doors, and screened only from the public gaze by *purdāhs*;[1] this period of the day I devoted to European literature, and keeping up correspondence with the world I had left.

At 3 p. m. my principal followers and landholders attended; the latter walking in, making their *salām*, and taking their places on the outspread carpet, and retiring as they chose; unless, when especially called or requiring any-

[1] Curtain, screen.

thing, having a plea to offer, an excuse to make, protection, assistance, remission, or other favour to demand, or the track of a tiger or of a robber to point out. In all such cases, the party would take his seat nearer to me, and we would converse, but in such a tone that any person present could put in his word, and very free of their advice and opinion the listeners were. The system bore with it more familiarity than at first I approved; and, as has been the case, when I have had a noseless thief on one side of me giving his advice, regarding an investigation going forward, on the other side, I have been inclined to affect more of European form; but, after all, this oriental nonchalance has its conveniences.

An hour before sunset, I was again on foot or on horseback, inspecting my troops, visiting my cultivation, encouraging the *raïyats*, putting in a word at this hut, and an encouraging glance at that field. It was always my object to set an example to my followers, of not injuring the crops, and I was obliged to make some severe examples in the endeavour; but the effect on all was great, and, instead of seeing fields and villages deserted as my cortège approached, the inhabitants soon learned to flock about and greet my arrival.

Such was the tenor of my life; two or three days of the week almost entirely out, and every day once or more in the fields. In this pleasant and useful manner, twelvemonths passed over my head; when the even tenor of my days was disturbed by events of more stirring interest.

I had not been long in my eyrie before I received a *purwāna* in the *faqīr's* hand and cipher, entirely approving of all I had done, encouraging me to a continuance of my present line of action, and promising protection and reward. A week afterwards Aliverdi Khān and his party arrived; he had kept me acquainted with his movements; and he now brought in seven of the party who had attacked us; they were miscreants, the refuse of several of the lower castes, some of them hardly knowing whether they were Musalmān or Hindū; but all ignorant of any religion, and inured from infancy to deeds of blood and spoliation—Kunjars, Gujars, and Chumārs.[1]

Scenes of debauchery and times of tumult were the harvests of these wanderers; they had been

[1] "*Kunjars* and *Kunchan*" are names equally applied to a tribe of gipsies who wander about India, pursuing their usual calling of thieves, beggars, and jugglers: they rather purchase and steal female children for a profligate life, than sacrifice their own women to it. *Gujars* are noted cattle-stealers; *Chumārs* are, properly speaking, leather-dressers, a low caste, ready to turn their hand to any thing that promises gain.

attracted by the preparations for my march, and followed my camp from Lāhor; with the usual quickness of their craft, they were soon masters of my little army; and one of them, hearing Mahammed Shāh hint that a few bold hands only were wanted to perform an easy job and gain a rich reward, a bargain was soon struck, five hundred rupees promised for putting me out of the way, and half that amount paid down as a retaining fee. The whole party consisted of sixteen men, and four of them being from Kāngrā neighbourhood, and being well acquainted with the country, they fixed the scene of operations. The affair was clumsily managed, and they were a cowardly set, or the event might have been different. Our activity in taking up the track was more than they expected, and Aliverdi Khān's untiring zeal in following up his tracker's scent (rendered more than usually keen by the high promises held out) quite floored the chase; so close indeed were my men several times on them, that the lighted embers of their *chulahs*[1] showed where their cooking had just been disturbed, and, with all their knowledge of the country, they were at last beaten with their own weapons.

[1] A fireplace. Travellers erect a temporary one, generally of mud or stones.

My men had at the beginning got such clear impressions of their feet, that although every device that ingenuity could suggest was practised, yet Wāhāb Ali and Khairāt Ali were too old at their trade to be deceived; and when no one else of the party could see a symptom of the chase, they would be keen on the track. But I must give the Multānī's own account of the pursuit.

"Indeed, *sāhib*, I often thought we were baffled. 'What are you after now, you lying scoundrel?' I said in a fit of despondency, to Wāhāb, on one occasion? 'What are you following? where are you leading us to?' 'Where? see this?' and one very faint clubbed-up foot was discernible. 'Why that's a bear, you fool.' 'Is it, Khān? You'll know better soon, and place more trust in Wāhāb on our next excursion; that's the bandy-legged fellow; he's a lout to take part in such a matter as this; they should have cut his throat and buried him in one of the heaps of leaves: he has betrayed them twice; there are smart fellows among them, but this bandy-legged fool thinks that by occasionally making a ball of his foot he can disguise it, but, if he trod on his head, Wāhāb would know it by the thickness.' 'You're a wag, my friend,' replied I, 'and I was wrong, forgive me.' 'Ah, Khān Sāhib! your servant is accustomed to such rubs;

his life is one of toil and of danger; thankless at all times, and only in its excitement offering any compensation. But we'll have these fellows as sure as my old father was the best tracker in the Julandar Doāb,[1] unless indeed they put Mr. Clubfoot out of the way, or that chap with the game leg. Did you observe that—there?' 'What? positively Wāhāb, you try a man's patience!' 'You try mine, Khān Sāhib; for if at that point the active little fellow, whose feet so seldom appear, did not leap on the back of the *lungra wāllā*,[2] I'll give up all claim to the Colonel Sāhib's reward — mind, Khān, when we've caught them, to ask the question—observe it was by the clump of bamboos on the high bank of the nala.'[3]

"Thus did we proceed, Sāhib, at a half walk, half amble; now cautiously feeling our way, now in all the confidence of knowledge pushing boldly forward. The game were masters of their work; indeed, as Wāhāb observed, if they had thrown a couple of their party overboard, they would have got off scot-free; as it was, they tried every trick that ingenuity could devise. In the

[1] *Doāb* means *two waters*, and is a term applied to indicate various provinces, included between two streams. The Julandar Doāb lies between the rivers Rāvī and Byah.

[2] Lame one. [3] A stream, or watercourse.

thick wood they evidently at times proceeded by climbing from branch to branch; again they would in a perfect line draw themselves forward on their bellies; then they would ride on each other's back; they would cross every stream, take the track on the opposite direction, return on their own footsteps; then, sometimes for miles, drop down the stream, and be off in quite a different quarter.

"Sometimes Wāhāb would be puzzled for a whole day; and once actually took us over some brushwood on which lay nestled our prey, who for days and nights herded with the hog-deer of the low hills, and even with their more fitting mates the tigers, that skulk about in every dell in those parts. The chase had, as I told the Colonel Sāhib, separated into two parties on the first night; but the next morning, they united, separating, however, again when hard pressed. For the last two days, the track was only of seven, and closely pressed they were: they were driven out of the wood, and literally pushed into the town of Nadoun.

"'We have them now,'[1] said the trackers, as,

[1] This termination of the pursuit is taken from a real tracking excursion, in which the robbers were thus traced into a town, and the leader of the pursuit told the head man of the place that he had traced the footsteps *into* the walls, but

holding on by our horses' tails, they made a circuit of the town, and satisfied themselves that the party had entered, but had not again left it. Leaving a party to watch at each gate, your servant pushed boldly up to the *thānah*,[1] and, with all the consequence I could muster, ordered the official to hand over to me the seven murderers that had, within the last few hours, taken refuge in the town. The *thānadār*[2] was high, but I was higher. 'Good, very good, Singhji, just as you please; but perhaps you are not aware, that he who addresses you is an officer high in the service, and in the confidence of the excellent and highly-favoured Colonel Bellasis, general and commander in-chief of the Kāngrā territory, and that these ruffians attempted the *sāhib's* life."

"'That alters the case entirely, *Khān Sāhib;* why did you not say so at first? for we Singhs are not used to be bearded at our *thānahs*. Tell

could find no track *out* again; that his *chārpaī* was across the gate, and there it should remain till the culprits were given up. Given up they were, after a decent delay, and they then made no attempt to deny their offence. When reminded that one horse had always been in the rear, and asked how this had happened, they replied, "Oh! he was lame, and could not keep up with the others;" thus verifying the tracker's observations.

[1] Police office. [2] Police magistrate.

me, however, quietly what you wish me to do, and I am at your service.'

"'Produce the men I seek; it will be better and pleasanter for both of us that there be no delay: my *chārpaī* is across the Juālā Mukhi Gate, and there it stays till my errand is complete.'

"'The Khān is rough of speech; but my master, Lena Singh, has ordered me to attend to all requisitions of the colonel you have mentioned; be comforted then, Kāhnji; if the men are within my walls, be it my responsibility to produce them.'

"'Wisely determined, Kotwālji;[1] I am to be found with my men; send us *rusud*,[2] grass,

[1] Nearly the same as Thānadār, but applied to a man with a wider jurisdiction.

[2] Literally, *the thing brought*, or rations. Throughout India, the government servants expect free quarters, and, if refused, owe a grudge to the stout zumīndār. Grass and wood especially are expected gratis; and, even if the superior pay for them, little, if any, of the price reaches the rightful owner. Englishmen, however, generally act otherwise, and I may here give an instance of the estimate in which they are held. A Jew, of Meshid, was lately applied to by a European, who professed to be an Englishman, travelling with despatches to Tehrān, and who asked for an advance of 500 ducats. The Jew gave the money, simply on the stranger's note of hand. It turned out that the rogue was a Prussian, in the Russian

grain, and milk; all shall be paid for, as are my orders: but hark ye, friend—to help your researches, here is the measure of their several feet; one—it is this, the big sprawl-foot—is lame, very lame of his left leg; and this little chap has a twist in both legs, and is preciously bandy besides; all of them must be leg-worn, for they've had no rest for a fortnight, and, I'll be bound, they've had their hearts in their mouths most of the time, too; and that does not help to rest a tired man.' With this we returned to our party, and had scarcely sat down to and commenced our food, and the relation of my interview with the *thānadār*, than the seven culprits, pinioned and ironed, bearing misery and famine in their aspect, were made over. With his mouth half full, Wāhāb jumped up; 'Yes, that's him, and there's the other; now tell me, old boy, did you not ride on yonder lad's shoulder from the bamboo clump to the big *pepul*?'[1] But the wretches were in no mood

service, who had, however, so much honesty as to write to the English *Chargé d'Affaires* at Tehrān, requesting that he would honour the bill, *for the credit of his country*. The Jew, being asked how he came to give the money to an unaccredited stranger, who could give no proof even that he was an Englishman, replied, "I believed he was what he said, because he would not accept any presents or gratuitous supplies."

[1] The holy fig-tree.

for a joke, and affected ignorance of what was said."

Such was the substance of Aliverdi Khān's report; not much extenuating or exaggerating what he had done; but showing pretty plainly that, if he had worked for me, he had also *worked* the Singh *Kotwāljī* pretty well too. In two stiff marches he made Kot Kāngrā; and the appearance of himself, party, and prisoners, showed that little grass had grown under their feet since we parted. A more villanous-looking set than those brought before me I have seldom seen. They at first denied the matter in *toto*, and got up a plausible enough story in defence; but a little gentle threatening, and the very conclusive evidence against them, induced them to confess.

One, a Bhourya, was a very intelligent ruffian, and seemed to have enjoyed the sport; his adventures I may some day lay before the public; but I must cut short the case, briefly stating that Nand Singh's, Mahammed Shah's, and the old Sikh's participation in the plot, was fully proved. The latter of course denied every thing; but when I caused a *purdah* to be drawn up, and showed him his horse, whose death, by a fit of gripes, he and his worthy commander had certified, he was so taken aback, that with

outstretched arms he craved my pardon. "I have nothing to say, my lord; your slave was misled; he was taught to believe you a tyrant and a monster; he has found you neither; it was my fate—do with me as seemeth best."

Nand Singh refused to plead, simply saying, I was pleased to desire his ruin, and might work my will. When he saw his confidant, Mahammed Shāh, attempting to vindicate himself at his expence, there was a slight quiver of the lip, but it passed, and his usual bold and insolent bearing returned. Indeed, to have seen him, a stranger would have little supposed him on trial for his life, but rather the indignant plaintiff in a case affecting his honour. In this he had his end to serve, and, before the court broke up, there were many loud and undisguised appeals for justice from the soldiery that crowded around. The man was a Sikh, and the majority of the lancers were so too; he was virtually their commanding officer, and had brothers and connexions among them. My position, therefore, was delicate: I hesitated for a few moments, but resolved that, come what would, his life should pay the forfeit; I therefore sentenced the nine inferior villains to be branded on the left shoulder with the word "ruffian," to receive each two hundred lashes on his bare back,

and then to work in irons as a felon for the term of his natural life.

This sentence was promulgated, and a scaffold with nine posts ordered to be erected on the public parade; arrangements were all made to put down at once any outbreak. It was done quietly, and without any uuusual stir. I appeared with my usual attendants at the hour appointed; the branding and flogging over, I ordered Nand Singh to the front; he was pale, the blood had forsaken his face, leaving a greenish hue over his countenance; but there was still no quailing, rather indeed a fiercer, wilder aspect than usual; the effect of opium with which he was largely drugged. I stood with him close in front of his regiment; I explained the enormity, the unmanliness of the act he had attempted; I offered a full pardon, on the one condition that he should give up his principal, and place in my hands the full means of convicting him. His eye glistened with a demoniac fire—"Never, dog, cursed, unclean, filthy Kāfr[1]—you have escaped me, but your web is spun—do your pleasure on my body—your own shall soon be rotting on your bones!" He would have proceeded, but I ordered the executioner to cut off his right hand

[1] Infidel.

at the wrist. He bore the amputation like a hero; no sign of pain, or cry for mercy escaped him: he looked around, as if expecting some event; his eye caught mine and faltered, and, at that moment, a carbine ball struck me on the left shoulder; the marksman was on the instant dragged from the ranks, and would have been then and there cut to pieces, but I stayed the swords of the slayers, and, faint as I felt, I upheld myself, saw that the man was a brother of Nand Singh's, and ordered his instant discharge without injury. He thanked me ironically, but, saluting me as he passed, said slowly, "Kāfr, we'll meet again."

I was fast sinking; people and things floated before me; I had just sense and strength remaining to tell the troops, that I had not originally intended to have executed the capital sentence without their full acquiescence, and that, but for the murmurs and speeches of the previous day, the present scene should not have been enacted. "But you know, my friends, there cannot be two masters, any more than two suns. If I am not to be obeyed, I had better yield up my command to the miscreant before you; his own words have now evinced his guilt; if there was doubt before, now there can be none. Did I choose to exercise my authority, I have ample means of enforcing it, but I purpose otherwise—the matter

is now in your hands: you have a choice of commanders; a few minutes, and my unbandaged wound will end my career. Nand Singh's circumstances are much the same; choose between us: run him up the block before you, or see me finish my career."—Saying thus, my knees shook, I fell to the ground, and my senses fled.

CHAPTER V.

Showing how, while one wound is healing, another may be received — An owre true tale — Many are Poets, who have never penned their inspiration, and an old woman may talk blank verse—Bellasis applies the sweetener and cement of civilized life, and finds it intelligible even to the Sikhs.

How long my insensibility lasted I cannot say; but, by the growth of my nails and hair, some days must have elapsed, when, towards mid-day, I awoke as from a troubled sleep. Confused visions and racking fancies perplexed my brain. I could not bring to my recollection where I was, and the confusion of my thoughts was the more aggravated by the gentle sounds and female hands that seemed ministering around my pillow. I fancied myself again in my own native valley; the turfy plain was before me, and on it were mixed, in mortal fray, the people of every land that I had visited in my travels; matchlocks were flashing, and bows were twanging around me; arrows passed through my brain, and

showers of sword-strokes seemed pouring on my head. I fled towards the bright, rapid river, on whose banks I had so often played in my boyhood, and, unable to escape my pursuers, had just gained the bank, when a magic power gently raised me from the earth, and in one bound landed me safely in the thick wood on the other side.

I awoke with a start: thick drops of perspiration were on my brow, my tongue was parched, and feebly I called for water; a female glided from my side, and my faithful *Pesh khidmat* quickly placed to my lips a cup of sherbet. Refreshed, I asked where I was, what was the matter, and who were those around me. "Hush, my master," was the reply, "you have been very ill, but by *Allah's* blessing the danger is over; none but friends and well-wishers are near; trust your servant, and be still."

I could not but obey, for my strength was already exhausted, and once more I sunk, for some hours, into a dreamy insensibility; but when, towards evening, I again awakened, it was with a fresher feeling, and inhaling the sweet breeze from the mountains. I felt a different person, and, seating myself on my cot, propped up by my pillows, I saw a child trip up to my side, who, by her joyous glances, showed the de-

light my recovery gave her. Her age was twelve, or perhaps less, her stature and proportions small, her countenance was in no feature handsome, being broad and of the Tartar stamp; but her forehead was of noble dimensions, and there was a bright, kindling fire in her deep-set eyes, that told of a heart of nature's own best stamp. Fearlessly and without affectation, she took my thin hand worn to a shadow, and, gently putting it to her lips, touched them again with her own fore-finger, and enjoined silence.

I was satisfied to gaze, for she brought to my mind gone-by days, and a loved sister who had thus sat by my couch side and thus watched me. "My mother will be here directly, *sāhib*, and how glad she'll be to see you thus!" Again she touched her lips and prevented reply; and at the moment a middle-aged dame entered the apartment with a cup of *charaita*[1] in her hand; in silence she put it to my lips; I drank, and the pleasant bitter much revived me. "My lord is better, blessed be *Bhugwān*[2] for the change; but rest and quiet are still needed: the *sāhib's* curiosity is excited, and on terms of silence it shall be partly gratified forthwith; and three

[1] A bitter, tonic herb, an infusion of which is drunk.

[2] The Deity. A term used by Hindūs, as *Allah* is by Musulmāns.

days hence we will answer all questions." I muttered acquiescence; and the dame seating herself at ease on the carpet by the side of my couch, and the child sidling up closely to me, and playing with my neglected hair, while my attendant seated himself at a respectful distance, the old lady thus commenced:—

"Our story in its broader features is in this blighted land no unusual one; we are of the stock of Kāngrā; the tendril by your side is the daughter of Amrōdh Chund,[1] and the withered

[1] The story of Kāngrā may not be uninteresting, as a sample of the Sikh policy in the hills.

Sansār Chund, the Kāngrā Rājā, was besieged by the Gūrkhas in 1809, and in his difficulty solicited Sikh assistance; Runjīt Singh with his troops arrived before the mountain fastness, where the Gūrkhas had taken up their position; but Sansār Chund now shrank from admitting so unsafe an ally as the Mā-harājah into his citadel: his son, however, Amrōdh Chund, was in the hands of Runjīt, who, depending on the apprehension he thus inspired, made a bold rush at the gate, obtained an entrance, and immediately substituted a garrison of his own, for that of Sansār Chund.

Runjīt left the chief the civil possession of his own territory, exacting, however, a fixed tribute. On the death of Sansār Chund, Amrōdh Chund succeeded, and held back from paying the *nazarānā*, demanded by Runjīt: eventually he yielded, and paid a lākh of rupees. Three years after, on his two sisters being demanded in marriage for relatives of Dhyān Singh's, Amrōdh Chund fled across the Sutlej, abandoning his territory to

being before you was his wife. My lord is a wise man; all Kohistān echoes with the praises of his justice and sagacity. He cannot then be ignorant how Kāngrā fell to the Sikh, how indeed the princes of the whole chain from the Sutlej to the Attak were absorbed by the grasping Runjīt, and his more grinding lieutenants. Our house ill bore the yoke; but when, last year, this sole blossom of our blighted tree was demanded by the upstart Dhyān Singh, and granted by his robber master, no hope remained, and our only refuge was in flight. We attempted to gain the British frontier; but so sudden was the design, that we were unable to make the necessary preparations and to take a sufficient escort. Another day would have ensured our safety,

the mercy of the Sikhs, who lost no time in seizing so valuable a possession. Kāngrā has ever since formed an integral part of the Sikh dominions. Another trait illustrative of the Sikh policy, I borrow from the Journal of Lieutenant A. Cunningham, given in No. cx. Asiatic Society Journal:—

"On the top of the pass I saw a gibbet with two cages, containing the skull of Thums and his nephew, the chiefs of Poonch, who had for a long time resisted the encroachments of the Jammu family. A price was set upon their heads by Gūlab Singh, but, from their known bravery, no one dared attack them openly; and they were at last killed, while asleep, and their heads carried to Gulāb Singh, who ordered them to be suspended from the Bheembār pass."

when we were attacked by a strong body of horsemen; my husband was slain or captured, our few stout followers were slaughtered, my daughter was torn from my arms, and I was told I might now take my way. Broken-hearted I returned to Kāngrā; and it was only two months since that this excellent woman restored to me my child; blessings on the heads of both!"

I turned to the farther corner of the room, and, for the first time, beheld another female, aged and wrinkled, attired in other fashion than the mother and daughter before me, and of another caste and stamp entirely. "Why she is a *Kanchanī*[1] surely," I exclaimed.

"My lord is partly right, but he must not speak, and a weak woman need not to tell a wise man that worth is to be found in every grade, and under every garb, as infamy surely is; but come forward, Glulābī, and tell the *sāhib* how you came here, and how our acquaintance commenced?"

Thus invited, the woman came forward, interesting even in her old age, and bearing the traces of former beauty. Placing her hand to her head, she moved up a little in the rear of the Rānī, and seating herself began her tale in a half-chant, half-mutter.

[1] Courtezan.

"The Rājā of Kāngrā protected the poor Kunjar;[1] it was the matchlock of Sansār Chund that saved our boy from the tree, and for a time preserved him to us; but he died; not, however, unavenged:"—and the harridan made me start again by the force with which she struck the ground. "Yes," she resumed, "curses on the Sikhs, on them and theirs! Cowards and robbers, they know no law but that of might, and they hang up the innocent on the pretence of having done the very acts they are themselves hourly committing. But it is of myself you ask, not them; my story is, however, too long for the *sāhib* now to hear; when he is well, if he still so desires, it shall be told; what, however, can the miseries of a wretch like me be to a noble like him? Yet I am not all unhappy, for I have saved this flower, and have half redeemed my debt to the princely house of Kāngrā: suffice it now to take up the Rānī's story.

"During the catastrophe she has mentioned, I was gathering simples along the skirts of the low hills; for, having long since abandoned the customs and practices of what may be now called my tribe, I eked out a maintenance by conducing to the welfare, as formerly I had done to the vices, of the community. While thus em-

[1] Gipsy.

ployed, a party of Sikhs, fresh from a late foray, overtook me; one of them bore in his arms the fainting body of this sweet girl; the man had known me in different times; he was then a dissolute Musulmān; I a loose though unwilling *Kunchanī*. He was tired of his burthen, and the party undecided as to its disposal; in my presence, the proposition was made and agreed to, of throwing it into a deep ravine. A glance at the pale features of their victim told me enough; but I expressed no interest in her fate, rather offering to assist; just, however, as her last moment seemed to have arrived, I said, as if unconcernedly, 'The girl is not ill-looking; you shall have fifty rupees and these bracelets for her;' showing them, at the same time, a pair worth forty rupees.

"Their avarice was excited. 'Ay,' says one (a dwarfish villain whose long locks covered his loss of ears), with a grin, 'our master would rejoice to see the damsel a *Kunchanī;* the proud scion of Kāngrā would dance to a new tune—ay, take her old lady, and give us the rupees.' I satisfied the wretches that they should get the money, and relieved them of their lovely charge. Such was the rude treatment she had received, that life was with difficulty restored. Fearful lest inquiry should be made, and the child be

again torn away, I concealed her until such a time as I could with safety restore her to her family, and have been thrice blessed in thus requiting the favour they showed to my own lost child.

"For seven days have we now watched by your pillow; it was the report of my little skill in the healing art that induced your servants to call me in; you were in a high fever, and the dressings applied to your wound had irritated rather than allayed the inflammation. I removed the bandages, applied soothing simples, and, praised be him who careth equally for the Sikh, the Hindū, the Moslem, the *faringī*, and the outcast *Kanjar*, that my exertions have availed."

"And shall be rewarded, good mother; but tell me more of yourself," I added, "for you have interested me much."

"Not now, *sāhib*—another time, if you will, but at present excitement would be dangerous."

"One question more, however, let me ask; what happy chance brought the Rānī and her lovely child to my dwelling?"

"The little service I had done had earned me a nook in her abode, *sāhib*, from whence I was sent for to attend you; the Rānī, who knew you by character, and had even on one occasion

seen you, was interested by your condition, and soon to anxious inquiries joined her personal assistance, until, for the last three days, mother and daughter have scarce left your pillow, and have watched you as a son or brother."

I will not trouble my readers with a lengthened detail of my sufferings, or of my slow recovery —suffice it to say, that the ball is still in my shoulder, and that, from the awkward attempts at removing it, much of my sufferings arose; but what commenced in misfortune tended more to my subsequent though brief happiness than it did to temporary ill. Not the least grateful occurrence of this time was the interest excited in my fate among my soldiers, and even more so among my husbandmen and traders. My doorways were thronged with visitors, immediately the rumour was about of my restored sensibility; and, for days, men of all classes pressed around my cot, each more anxious than the other to express his good wishes. Some, doubtless, were time-servers, but many, I trust, spoke from their hearts. Chiefly were my Multānīs delighted at the prospect of my recovery, and from them and others I soon heard how unanimously the sentence passed on Nand Singh had been executed; and how the very Sikhs in the regiment had lent a hand in enforcing justice.

My illness and convalescence gave me time and opportunity to examine my own position, and the general feeling as regarded myself and the government I served. It was not concealed from me, that my position was dangerous; that by taking the life of a Khālsā Sikh, I had deeply offended the nation; that by capitally punishing an offender, without reference to the court, I had been supposed to aim at independence; and that my very popularity at Kāngrā was a crime worse than all. Many were the sifting questions put to me, to draw out my intentions; much the honest advice given, and more the treacherous counsel poured into my ear; but I listened to all, and replied with civil nothings, or said what was the strict truth, that "my pleasure was the will of the *durbār;* as its servant I should obey all lawful orders, and should such misfortune fall on me that I should be required to act against the right, I should so far bow to my fate, that, turning my horse's head towards a more friendly land, I should with regret bid adieu to his highness's territory."

In two months I had recovered my strength, and during much of this time the three females tended me as if I had been their own; the old lady was kindness itself, while the gentle child wound round my heart to such a degree, that I

was scarce easy in her absence; and I delighted to find that my presence was as grateful to her. Child as she was, uneducated and Hindū, there was in her a fountain of truth and of common sense, of tenderness and sensibility, that daily more endeared her to me. As a Rajpūtni and hill-woman she had been kept in little of the restraint that usually falls to the lot of oriental females, contaminated by Moslem customs; considering me irrecoverably ill, and therefore, rather a creature of another world than this, neither she, her mother, nor the old *Kunchanī* had stood on any ceremony, and my suddenly awakening while surrounded by my nurses, prevented our undergoing the usual formalities, or their more ceremoniously entering my chamber.

Gulābi was gifted with a great fund of right feeling and sound sense, that had carried her little scathed through the scenes of vice in which her youth had been spent. It was one evening during my recovery, that she thus addressed me: "*Sāhib*, praised be the Great Benefactor of all! your honour's strength has now increased, and your *laundi*[1] will tell her tale if it is still desired."

"By all means, mother," I replied, "I am all

[1] Slave, servant.

anxiety." She forthwith began her narrative, seating herself at ease on the carpet, and folding her arms, with downcast head, keeping up a gentle swing of the body, as if in cadence with her song, for it was a rapid rhapsody, in the most flowery gipsy dialect, rather than a sober detail of facts. Her meaning only I profess to give, as indeed I do in all the narratives or speeches of my native acquaintances; but without further preface we will enter on Gulābī's tale.

"The wretchedness of a *kunchanī's* life my lord cannot understand; my tale shall therefore consist of facts rather than of feelings. I was a child, much of the age of this sweet girl, when I was stolen from my parents: all I can remember is, that my father was a man of some consideration, the head of a village. The time of my birth is marked by that troubled period, when the whole hill region was excited by the unnatural rebellion of Brij Rāj against his father Runjīt Deo; the Deo Rājah, bringing into our mountains on one side or other, as friends or as foes, the squadrons of the different Sikh Misals. The chiefs of Chumba, Nurpūr, Kāngrā, and Basaihur aided their brother Rājah, and unwisely they let into the confederacy the leaders of the Dhani Misal, thus opening to the wily enemy, as

friends, the fastnesses of our country, and showing them the road, when they should find it convenient to meet us as foes.

"Churat Singh, the grandfather of Runjīt Singh, the present ruler, was the chief supporter of the rebellious Brij Rāj; he (Churat Singh) was a wary prudent soldier, and might have effected his nefarious designs, had not his career been cut short by the bursting of his matchlock. The day that he died I have heard was the day of my birth, and even now do I recollect the first joyous days of my childhood, when, bounding over the crags, or gathering wild flowers on the mountain sides, I gained that strength of constitution and that knowledge of plants that has since stood me in such stead. One sister and one brother were my playmates; the former was younger, and the latter four years older than myself. What may have been my sister's, my father's, and my mother's fate I know not; my noble brother fell, as brother should, in resisting the ravishers of his sister.

"The party that carried me off had been sent by the villain, Jai Singh Bunghi, on the accursed errand of murdering parents, to steal their children for the vilest of purposes. It is needless to wound the feelings of my lord, or to rack my own soul, with a detail of what I suffered;

neither my youth nor my innocence could save me, neither my tears nor my threats could turn the ruthless savage from his purpose. More than once I attempted self-destruction, but I was watched, and food was forced down my throat, and finally I became the ruined thing you see me. Yes, before womanhood had fairly grown upon me, I was a withered, hopeless, broken-hearted creature, ashamed to return to my father's house, even should I succeed in evading the watchfulness of my keepers, and soon disregarded even by my despoiler, and thrown aside for another and a later victim. Short, however, was the interval of comparative happiness, of quiet and solitariness that I enjoyed, when I was, as a worn-out garment, parted with to an old *kunchanī*, as payment for the services of her squad at a festival.

"I was now virtually the slave of a devil;[1] of

[1] Prostitution in the East does not entail all the horrors and evils that it does in England; the system is somewhat like that in France, a recognised and licensed portion of the state; poverty and disease, therefore, do not prevail to so fearful an extent as in London. But terrible still are the tales disclosed by the wretched beings devoted to this odious purpose, and a new feature in it has of late years been discovered in the trade of *Megpunnee*. Major Sleeman's report on this subject shows a regularly organized system for the murder of parents, that the

one who, though of my own sex, was dead to the slightest feeling of right; who would have sold her own daughter to infamy, or given the child of her bosom, if possible, to a worse fate. The life I led with her for twelve years, you may imagine; I danced before *Surdārs*, attired in silken vestments and sparkling with jewels, the

children may be procured for the most degrading purposes; and Major Crawfurd's notes on oriental slavery disclose a "system of iniquity" on the same head. The victims, in whatever way obtained, are educated for their vocation, their entire proceeds going to their employers, who foster and deck them out in proportion to their beauty. When no longer profitable, they are cast adrift, or are employed in the most menial offices by their owners. In no country in the East does prostitution appear to be so much legalized as in the Punjāb, nor does it any where exist to so great and unblushing an extent. In the countries east of the Indus the slave trade is limited in a great measure to the purchase and sale of girls for the purposes of prostitution, or for the supply of the hārams of the great; but westward of that river, especially in the countries bordering upon Tūrkistān, men and women are equally made the subjects of barter. To so great an extent was this traffic carried on at Hirāt before the arrival of the British mission there in 1839, that upwards of twelve thousand persons are said to have been sold to Khiva from that city and its environs, after the siege; and so general was the trade that Shāh Kāmrān himself, and two of his officers, were the only persons of power in the city, who were not slave dealers; the chief of them being Yār Mahomed, the minister and virtual ruler. Twelve, fourteen, and twenty slaves were often given for a horse.

envied of all beholders; I exhibited before Runjīt Singh himself, and before his father Māhā Singh. But while smiles were on my brow, and laughter on my lips, my very heart was breaking, and I was exerting myself in the hope that life's cord would snap, and I should end my days in their presence. *Kunchanīs* and *nāch* girls disgrace not the dwelling of my lord; but he is doubtless aware of the scenes that daily and nightly occur at Lāhor; how he whom they call Māharājah doses wretched girls, worn-out women, and mere infants with the strongest liquors, indeed with liquid fire, and then sets them to squabble; how all decency is banished from the presence, all shame is mocked at. Even now I blush to say how often I have taken part in such scenes; how, intoxicated with *bhung*,[1] or with liquor, I have been the most riotous of the roystering crew, so much so that I became a favourite, and had a *jāgīr* assigned me.

"I might even have turned the tables on my mistress, but no time or habitude could reconcile me to my position, and though the drunken Gulābi was favourite of the *durbār*, the same Gulābi was a dull, lifeless creature when in her senses; and was soon more than ever trampled

[1] An intoxicating preparation, procured from hemp.

on as a sullen, dangerous inmate. My value thus lowered, my treatment became, if possible, worse; the shoe was daily applied to my mouth,[1] and had they supposed that I could have endured heavier weapons, such would have been applied; as it was, the nights that were not passed in debauchery were occupied in grinding grain for the other inmates, or in plaiting the hair of a younger or more favoured *kānīzak*.[2] Sleep was thought unnecessary to me; and often, after having during the long weary night turned my

[1] The common ignominious punishment in the East, idiomatically called "eating the shoe." Gulābi's description of her own employments is taken from the life. The daily supply of corn for each family is ground in a heavy hand-mill almost always by women. The fact that no store of flour is prepared shows why Moses forbade the mill-stone to be taken as a pledge, "for he taketh a man's life to pledge;" all night long the sound of the mill may be heard in a town, a small lamp burning beside the grinder. This must be remembered to understand the denunciation of scripture, "The sound of the mill-stone shall be heard no more at all in thee, and the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee."

As to Gulābi's other tasks, I have often seen such sights in a street, at mid-day; "the mistress of beauty" reclining at ease, while her servant cleaned and adorned her hair. This does not, of course, apply to the upper class of women, who are secluded; but, in India, no one of whatever rank performs for himself or herself any office it is possible to get any body else to do.

[2] A slave girl, female attendant.

coarse stone, I have been dragged off my wretched *chārpāī* to make way for another—to fan or tend, to dress or adorn, one of my companions.

"Such a life could not last for ever: how my frame sustained it for such a term of years I can scarce understand. At length the long looked-for opportunity occurred, and I fled across the Sutlej, and for several years remained concealed at Ludiāna.

"For a time, and by stealth, I was obliged to follow the practices of my adopted tribe to prevent starvation; but my loathing was not the less that such should be my calling. It was during this time that I purchased, with one of the ornaments I had carried off with me, a young boy from a strolling party, who had evidently stolen him for the Lāhor market. The lad grew and gained on me, and was to me as a son, more loving than a hundred natural born children; he was to me as my breath, the one thing that loved me—that I loved—the one being that knew me and knew not of my shame; he called me mother, and believed me to be so, and clung to me with a girlish fondness; but he was a bold and a fearless lad, and whenever I would let him from my sight, he would be running errands for the police peons, riding the *sowārs'* horses to

water, and making himself so useful that Prabhu was soon a well-known character, was trusted to clean the soldiers' arms, and could, as a boy, ride the most unruly horse, so that a fair opening offered for service with the British.

"But, outcast as I was, and estranged as I had become to my own land, my heart still yearned after my native hills; and, feeling now that time had done its work upon me, that little of my former attractions remained, and that I ran no danger of detection, I determined to endeavour to seek my long-lost home. But the same five-and-twenty years that had passed over my head had caused its changes in the whole range of hills; so that with years of care, of toil, of searching, and of peril, I could trace nothing of my father's fate, and gained no clue to the site of my birth-place.

"While wandering in the hilly country, chance threw us on a party of the Kāngrā Rājah's troops then returning from a foray. My Prabhu urged me to allow him to join their ranks, and I consented. Within a month he was taken prisoner in repelling an inroad of the Sikhs, and, to frighten others from the Kāngrā ranks, my son, with others, was tied up to a tree, to be used as a mark by their coward captors. Disguised in male attire as a *faqīr*, I had followed

their course, and as soon as I learnt the dreadful intention, I flew to Kāngrā; I painted to the chief the disgrace it would bring on his name, if he allowed to be sacrificed those who had ventured their lives in his cause. My tears prevailed: dangerous as was the service, the Rājah himself, with a chosen band, took the field, and by a long and rapid march came up after the slaughter had commenced, but still in time to save my boy; the cowardly butchers fled, leaving some twenty dead on the field; for, thoughtless of danger, and unconscious of the vicinity of an enemy, the Sikhs were taken completely by surprise.

"Time passed, and, as you are aware, the Rājah of Kāngrā became but as a cipher in his own hall; his troops were hardly his own, and his best and most faithful followers were daily dismissed or cut off, on one pretence or another. On a false accusation of adultery, as false as his own false heart, the villain Gulāb Singh had my son seized,[1] and ordered that he should be thrown from the top

[1] Give every man his due. The Rāja has no right to this tale, and the odium thereof; but the incident is generally believed to be true, not of a Sikh, but of a so-called Christian governor under the Punjāb rule. This man, it is said, sent two men to fetch a woman for his own purposes; they violated their charge: one was differently punished, the other was put to death in the manner here described.

of a high tower. That I live to tell the tale is to myself wonderful—yes, I will live until my hands are dyed in the blood of the cold-blooded, false-hearted miscreant. Prabhu was a powerful man, a giant in strength; he was the hero and the pride of Kāngrā; it was, therefore, difficult to find executioners. The deed was, however, done; my boy was thrown over the battlement, but his struggles were such that he did not clear the balustrade to which he clung, and finally succeeded in ensconscing himself on it; his assassins feared to approach him lest he should drag them with himself to destruction. They endeavoured to entice him up, but, until they went to Gulāb Singh and returned with an assurance of full pardon, he stirred not, he spoke not; when the signet was however shown and a solemn pledge of safety given, he clambered again to the fatal roof, and before his footing was recovered, the monsters fell on him, and thus hurled him far over the parapet and clear of all impediments. Life was at once extinct: in place of my beautiful, my manly boy, I picked up a mass of livid flesh, and could scarce recognise the corpse of my child."

This last portion of Gulābi's story was scarcely breathed out, while, with clinched hand, distended nostrils and veins, and eyes pouring out

very fire, the bereaved woman called down curses on those who had again darkened her lone house; who had put out the one solitary lamp that cheered her desolate condition.

"Yes, his day shall come, when his own son shall fall: and their day will come; cowards and traitors have they ever been; they have risen on the ruin, the murder of all that was noble around them. Where have they ever shown manhood? —no, it was ever by fraud, by falsehood, by sowing dissension, by setting son against father, or bribing the servant to betray his master; it was thus and not in the fair field that they have gained the mastery. The Mughuls hunted them as foxes; the Afghāns drove them as sheep before them; Nādir Shāh and his Persians heeded them not, and the very Mahrāthās, in the first rise of their fortune and pride of their infancy, passed through their hordes as a whirlwind. The *faringī* Jāj Thomas, when he held Hānsī, said he could seize the Punjāb with two thousand men; and so he could, and so will some brave man yet, and my old eyes will yet see their temples defiled and their tanks sprinkled with the blood of their own accursed sect; did I not live in such a hope, this day would end the career of Gulābi.

"But let me end my tale while sense yet re-

mains to do so, for it is not always that my strength can bear such opening of my wounds. I was permitted to remove the corpse; I burned it, and fled far from Kāngrā; wandered I knew not whither, nor do I know how long, but years have elapsed, moons and moons have rolled over me; the dew of night has wet my head, and the hot sun of day has scorched me; nightly have I watched star after star arise, gain their utmost height, and sink again towards the west; seldom indeed have my eyes closed until the morning appeared, and the blush of dawn has often gilded my *chārpaī* before I had laid myself on it. And all these long wakeful hours, one thought, one hope was on my soul—vengeance! My subsistence was gained by gathering herbs, and, as want urged me, carrying them to the nearest *bazārs* for sale. It was while thus employed, the opportunity occurred of saving the Rānī's lovely daughter—the one bright spot in my long life of misery."

She ceased, and with outstretched arms and clinched hands the forlorn creature threw herself on the ground, with her bare forehead on the earth, and thus remained for several minutes in silence, for I could not break the sanctity of her grief, nor did I attempt by words to effect impossibilities, but I let nature have its way. Gra-

dually recovering, the poor woman resumed her position; and, seeing by my looks how much I commiserated her, she bowed in grateful silence and withdrew.

Many a tale of herself and others did the old woman tell me, and much light did she throw on my mind in regard to the dreadful crime of child-stealing, so common in all the hilly tracts of the East, which are made to furnish regular supplies, not only for the *zanānāhs*[1] of grandees, but for the brothels of the plains.

Chanda Kanwar, the old Rānī too, wiled away many an otherwise weary hour with tales of the former grandeur of her house, with legends of Kāngrā, and narrations of the feuds of the Chouhāns and Rāthors,[2] of Moslem wiles and of Sikh treachery. The last as being freshest in memory was most bitterly dealt out, and triumphantly did the old

[1] Apartments for women.

[2] Rival Rājpūt tribes, in ancient days. I cannot ascertain the time when great numbers of the Chouhāns embraced Mahomedanism, but most of the mixed Mahomedan tribes on the banks of the Sutlej of the present day claim descent from them. In the Ayīn Akberry there is a list of seven Chouhān princes, who reigned at Delhi, ending with Pitorah, who was defeated (having before gained seven pitched battles from the Moslem) by Sultan Moy-u-dīn Sani, at the battle of Thānesur, A.H. 598. But it was the great Alla-ud-dīn who quite broke the power of the clan; during his reign of twenty years he de-

lady exclaim, " Yes! never by force or by fair fighting could the dogs have found entrance. Did we not, after a twelvemonths' siege, drive Akbar, the Great Emperor of Dehlī, from before our mountain fastness? Did not the Gurkhās, bold as lions, in vain seek an entrance, and fruitlessly, by famine or by sword, endeavour to induce surrender? But the arts and the gold of the Sikh prevailed; he plunders one to bribe another, and employs the victim of yesterday to decoy or destroy others and others; thus has his tide swelled until the Punjāb has no longer bounds for his pride and ambition; it remains to see what game he'll play with the *faringī;* but though it swept with it me and mine, and destroyed the last relics of Kāngrā, my heart would welcome the flood of foreigners that should sweep root and branch of the accursed Sikhs from the earth."

In such like conversation, with occasionally a song from Gulābī or from the sweet lips of Māhtāb, my bed of sickness was cheered; and even when my strength was so far renewed as to allow of my leaving it, the difficulties of my po-

stroyed no less than eight *Chouhān* principalities. To the interesting passages of Tod I refer for details of the glories of the *Chouhāns* and *Rhatores.*

sition, and the great accumulation of arrears of business, could hardly draw me from the magic circle of my *zanānāh;* daily, however, reports came in and rumours thickened that told me it was time to be up and stirring.

Two months had elapsed from the day of the catastrophe, when I ordered a parade of all my troops, and going down the ranks on a gently ambling ghunt,[1] my heart glowed at the loud shouts of welcome that greeted me, and the satisfaction, nay, delight, that appeared in the eyes of my men; the few even who would have drank my blood deemed it prudent to put on holiday faces;—I knew them, however, and was not deceived.

On the turfy sward, I had that evening laid out a feast for those who were present at the morning's parade; and the rich *kabābs*[2] and *pulāos*, and cloying sweetmeats, supplied in profusion, did not satisfy the soldiery less than did my warm thanks and grateful praises of the morning; with their bellies full, they were all heroes; each was ready to lay down his life for me, and every man of them would follow me to Roum, nay, beyond the *kālā-pāni*.[3]

Your metal may be tried yet, my men, mused

[1] Hill pony. [2] Roast meat. [3] The black water, *i. e.* the sea.

I; and then I considered as I gazed on the rough, rude creatures, on their generally spare, sinewy forms reflected by the bright moonlight in all degrees of relief, how many of them were really my friends; how many, in an hour of need, would place his body between mine and the impending blow; and then my musings took a more general turn, on the extraordinary engine of a mercenary army; by what magic influence it is kept together; how small a spark has destroyed the fabric of years, how little is required to soothe and to gratify rude minds, and how little to rouse and irritate them. And then I wondered if the English ever cast these ideas in their minds, and if it ever occurs to them that an injudicious or tyrannical officer at the head of their troops, or civil relations, is worse than useless, that he is a firebrand, and in a day may destroy their whole goodly fabric—to pension such a one, to reward him for making himself scarce, would be great gain. In such cogitations I sauntered between the ranks of feeders, until my tired limbs told me it was time to repose, and the noisy symptoms of repletion warned me that the feast was over.

CHAPTER VI.

A word to the wise—Puss offers a velvet paw—Some account of a misfortune to which all men are, have been, or will be, liable, and therefore of universal interest—A storm gathers.

I must now return to the capital, and show the state of affairs there as they affected me and my interests; and this can be best done by furnishing a translation of some of Chānd Khān's reports, a summary of which, after compliments, was to this effect:—"Blessed be Allah that my master's life has been saved, and that the Sikh dog has met his desert; but it would have been better, my lord, to have put him out of the way quietly,[1] (and there are a hundred modes of doing

[1] Again I must disclaim my friend Chānd Khān's doctrines; he writes as an oriental man of the world, brought up in the school of expediency, with primitive notions of fealty, and strong feelings on all points. Such a man thinks of getting rid of an enemy, as he would of despatching a tiger or snake; *the thing*

so,) than to rouse the hornet's nest you have done. There's not a ruffian about Lāhor, that adds Singh to his villain name, but affects to desire your blood. Nand Singh had many friends; they are, of course, determined on your ruin; the strict Khālsā Sikhs also look on your deed with horror, little less than if you had killed a cow; and last come the mob, loud in the cry for justice.

"So far Runjīt Singh has stood your friend, but I tremble to think how long he can withstand the appeals of those around him—and, but that I thought I could best serve my lord's cause by my absence, he should, ere this, have seen Chānd Khān with a hundred stout followers at his feet. The times are difficult, my master; and knowing that prevention is better than cure, I am paying handsomely in all directions, without respect to friend or foe; if we disarm the latter, we shall not need the former. But let your servant implore you to be cautious; the friends of Nand Singh are throwing about their bags of rupees, and in a high quarter it is being attempted to take advantage of the times, to acquire Kāngrā. Suchet Singh has

must be done, the only question is as to the safest way of doing it. But this does not bespeak blood-thirstiness; the same man would probably help the poor and oppressed.

even, I understand, moved off quietly in your direction, and has appointed several detachments to concentrate and join him in your neighbourhood, in the expectation that, ere he reaches, a *parwāna* for your disgrace will have been wrung from the Māharājah.

"Even this morning, when the *durbār* was cleared of all but some few of the confidential members, I heard from without, that loud words were passing, and even could hear Runjīt Singh say, that he thought you were quite right in what you had done, and that you had only failed in not informing him; that he wished he had many servants like Bellasis, who dealt equally with all sects, with the rich and the poor, and neither enjoyed cutting off men's limbs, nor confiscating their property. The Māharājah was excited, and his warmth was in full equalled by that of his *Vazīrs*, the chief of whom taunted him[1] with infidelity, of sacrificing his own sect and pampering infidels. Runjīt affected not to observe the insolent remark, but said he should fine you, for exceeding your authority.

[1] Some writer (Captain Osborne, I believe) mentions that in 1825, when Runjīt Singh refused to join the confederacy against the British at the time of the second Bhartpūr siege, his surdārs brought him woman's apparel. In durbār there is often a license of speech that would astonish a European subject.

" Such scenes as these, my lord, will be daily enacted, and the result will be that a *parwāna* will be given; when it is, *I shall decamp*, and hope to reach Kāngrā before it does. However, on no account obey: — remember the order will be extracted from the ruler; and that it is farthest from his desire that you should attend to it. If, however, you are so far misled as to yield up your post, or, if on the strength of the royal *sanad*, Kāngrā is wrested from you, my lord's life is not worth an hour's purchase. Silence and their ends can best be effected by your death; and *you will either be killed in open rebellion, or die of your wounds;* it matters little that not a sword be drawn, sufficient witnesses will swear to all that is required.

" For myself, I have been tampered with; thy servant has been thought so meanly of, that filthy rupees have been offered to induce me to desert my master's interests, to sell my lord's counsel—even to be still—the dogs! I hate them the more that they should suppose me the miscreant they are themselves; they look on a Pathān as a purchaseable commodity; they forget that he is so only when he is a forced subject, an unwilling servant; but that for his natural chief, or the leader of his heart, he would spill his life's blood."

Yes, I believe he is honest, mused I ; and if he is not, he is indeed a wretch. Awkward news all this, but let me see what the Rāja and the Faqīr say. The former's note being first opened, I thus read:—"Health to my friend and well-wisher, the brave and wise Colonel Bellasis, a meeting with whom I am most desirous of effecting. All the friends of the noble *wilāyati* have been stricken by grief at the intelligence of his illness, and are now thankful at his recovery; if change of air and a colder climate would benefit my friend, Jammu, Chambu, and all we have, is at his service. The death of Nand Singh was an unfortunate accident. Is it true that in a mutiny of the soldiers he was slain? No doubt my friend can clear up the matter, but at present the Māharājah's *mizāj*[1] is clouded, and his highness desires to know what punishment has been inflicted on the murderers. What can thy well-wisher say more than that during thy absence he desires no greater happiness than to receive thy pleasure-giving epistles?"

The wary Rāja! and does he indeed think me so *katcha*[2] as to be entrapped in Jammu, and to clank my chains by the side of his native

[1] Temper, disposition. [2] Soft, unripe, raw.

captives? No, if I fall into his power, it shall not be alive, and with my corpse he's welcome to do his utmost.—Thus I ruminated while I unrolled the folds of the Faqīr's note, and spelt its ciphers, which ran to this effect:—"After warmest expressions for my friend's welfare, and hopes of a happy interview, his well-wisher, the Faqīr, who is nothing, would hint to the wise Bellasis that in putting to death Nand Singh he acted inconsiderately, and may thereby bring himself into trouble. This friendly epistle is however not intended to disturb but to caution the Sāhib, lest peradventure greater evil come. His highness favours his servant and trusts his confidential agent; he bids me therefore remind you of the instructions you have received, and, on receipt of this note, desires that you take them out, and again read them line by line, word by word, and reflect on their import:—the wise are exalted, the faithful meet with reward; what more is needed? the comprehensive mind of Bellasis must understand."

You deal in riddles, Faqīrjī, mused I, but I presume that it is the intention to make a cat's paw of me, to order me to give up my post, and intend that I should not obey; an awkward enough predicament for an unfriended man. In the midst of such a nest of intriguers, however,

I'll do as seemeth right, and leave the result to Providence. Again I took up the cover of Chānd Khān's letter, and perceived a small slip of paper which had before escaped my notice; on it was written, in evident excitement, these few lines.

"This moment I have learnt that an order has been given in favour of Suchet Singh, and that you are no longer Governor of Kāngrā:—your servant has already written fully; repetition is needless; may my noble master prosper; his servant watches his interests, and is all anxiety to join him."

I expected as much, and was therefore by no means disconcerted. To gain over then the faction generally opposed to the Rājahs, and to affect the neutrals in my favour, was now my game, and no longer to waste my means by attempting to keep terms with my powerful enemies. I therefore at once wrote off to Chānd Khān, and desired him to open a close communication with the Bhaes, Rām Singh, and Gobīnd Rām, and also to offer my best services to Fatteh Singh Mān, and Khushiyāl Singh, as well as to the Utārie and Sandanwālā Sūrdārs. To Lena Singh Mājetea, I myself wrote as follows:—

"The fame of Lena Singh has burst the bounds of the Punjāb, it has swept to the

furthest corners of Hindūstān, and has reached the western countries, where the wise men pant to become acquainted with the Plato of the age, the Aristotle of the East. Thy friend and well-wisher, oh, most excellent Surdār! is a poor, unfriended foreigner, trusting to his good sword, his clean hands, and his undaunted heart; but more so to the justice and the discernment of the great monarch of the Punjāb and his trusty counsellors and Surdārs, among whom, who more wise, more valiant, who a trustier comrade, a more confidential adviser, than Lena Singh? The Surdār need not to be told of the late events at Kāngrā, and of the storm that gathers around his well-wisher, who, remembering the late kindness of his friend, reminds him that the hour of adversity is the time to discover friends, to recognise enemies, and that, counting on Lena Singh as amongst the stanchest of the former, he now offers to him a treaty, and binds himself by the most sacred pledge to requite four-fold, in his need, any aid now afforded to Kāngrā. To dilate further would be disrespectful."

Having thus taken my measures, and having, as far as my strength permitted, visited my posts, thrown up a traverse here, sprinkled

crow's feet there; cleared away some rubbish and intervening buildings; seen that my granaries were well stored, and that, on commanding points, large heaps of rocks and stones were collected, I told off my troops to their respective posts, desiring that a vigilant look-out should be kept, while with small bodies of horse I swept the country, to feel its pulse, and to acquire the earliest intelligence of friend or foe. Thus busily occupied, I almost forgot, in my restored strength, the kind nurses and tender companions of my long convalescence, who, at my request, still occupied a wing of the large old building in which I dwelt, but whom for many days I had not seen.

One afternoon, after a peculiarly heavy day's work, I was enjoying the air from a balcony, a step lower than the general terraced roof of the building, which, in delicacy to the females, I now avoided. Reclining half asleep, and still trying to rouse myself, I was startled by the words of the following song, in the voice of the child, Māhtāb Konwur; there was a pensiveness and a sadness in her tones, that, if I had considered her as more than a child, would have led me to suppose she had found the hero of her choice:—

"My mother bids me seek a spouse,[1]
To whom to give my maiden vows;
Rājās and Thākurs,[2] waiting near,
Abide my choice 'twixt hope and fear.

Within my heart a gem lies hid,
For *him* 'twill glow who lifts the lid;
Within my breast a fountain sleeps,
For *him* 'twill gush who opes its deeps.

Within my soul I feel a power,
To love through every changeful hour;
But none has waked that slumbering might,
Or kindled that still sleeping light.

A vision visits oft my dreams,
A bright and manly form it seems;
But, when the expectant crowd draw near,
Will such a form mid them appear?

Then who shall wear the nuptial wreath,
If none can wake affection's breath?
No, rather let me still abide
A maiden by my mother's side."

[1] "Hindoo women of distinction, by ancient as well as existing usage, were not debarred the sight. When a female of the royal race was marriageable, or supposed to possess a discriminating choice, she was conducted to an apartment, where many youths of her own tribe were assembled, and, being desired to select from them her future husband, she distinguished the object of her partiality by throwing over his neck a wreath of flowers. This custom, I am informed, has been observed within these late years at Tanjore."—*Forster's Travels.*

[2] Princes and lords.

Unwilling to intrude, but still unable to restrain myself, I ascended the little flight of steps that led to the terrace, and found the gentle girl in tears. She started at seeing me, and, unlike her former tender and affectionate manner, she seemed annoyed at my approach, and did all but repulse my intrusion.

"What ails my gentle Mātāb? Sweet child, has aught distressed you?"

"Sāhib, your *Loundi* is not a child, and it beseems her not to be thus seen with man."

"Forgive me, sweetest, if I have offended, but the words of your song, and more, their tones, decoyed me; such melancholy ditty ill becomes my joyous Mātāb."

"Leave me, Sāhib, and intrude not thus on my privacy; true we are your guests, and eat of your bounty, but my lord has not before dealt thus with the poor daughter of Kāngrā."

There was something in the tone that threw on me a flood of light. "Tell me, my gentle, my sweet girl, is your heart engaged? I would be your friend, and would die to save your pure heart a pang."

She proudly answered—"Engaged! a Rājpūt maiden, unasked to pledge her heart"—but the effort was too much; she had too long striven against nature to appear unconcerned,

her strength failed, and she fell at my feet. Distressed beyond measure, but unwilling to bring witnesses to the scene, I hurried away for water and other restoratives. I chafed her temples, bathed her hands and head, and at last, to my delight, saw signs of returning life. She uttered some incoherent words, but they sufficed to tell me that her young heart was mine, and that she had looked on me with feelings far different from those with which I had regarded her. I drew her to my bosom, and swore to cherish the sweet flower to my last hour; half unconsciously, she nestled towards me, and when her senses were wholly restored, I still retained her by gentle violence.

In the conversation that ensued, I told more of my tale than appears in these pages, and added, that I had hitherto looked on her as a creature separated by an impassable barrier from myself; but now that the flood-gates of my heart were opened, that I found myself loved, I could with truth and all honesty declare that I loved her as I had never loved woman; that her happiness was the dearest desire of my heart, and that I wanted only opportunity to prove my devotion.

"Devotion, indeed!" exclaimed Māhtāb, "let me be thy sister, daughter, slave, so that I shall

have a right to watch thy looks, to gaze upon thee, to tend thee."

"A *Rajpūtnī*[1] thou, and I a Christian!"

[1] Captain Abbott's beautiful tale of the "Thakorine" gives many illustrations of the Rājpūtnīs, their chivalrous honour, and the sacrifices they make to it. To that work I refer the reader for poetry both in subject and language. But even the prose of real life affords tales as curious as ever were invented; in proof of which I give an incident, communicated by a friend, in whose words it follows. The facts appeared in the London prints for the winter of 1826-27; they furnish a specimen of the mode in which even the affections manifest themselves in an eccentric man. Let it not, however, be supposed that I meant to draw Bellasis as a person who would have thus shown his love; though Major H.'s strong and enduring attachment for his wife shows that my story does not in this particular exceed nature.

"When I read Māhtāb Konwur's story, I was reminded of some incidents that made a strong impression on my youthful mind. There can be no harm in your publishing them, for they appeared at the time in the London papers, and caused a nine days' wonder: they have probably long since vanished from the memory of all not personally interested in them, and my account will not bring any names before the public.

"Major H. was an officer in the king's service, who served in the Madras presidency, some thirty or forty years ago. He became attached to a native lady, named Fyzoo; never, I believe, regarded her with any but honourable views, and married her. She bore him three children (one of whom is now an officer in the army,) and died, leaving the youngest, an infant, who bore the mother's name. Major H. quitted India upon the death of his wife, and brought her remains with him to England in a

"True, and I would that thy faith were as mine, but, with thy practice, I would fain know the God that directs thy conduct."

leaden coffin. Shortly after his arrival, the little Fyzoo likewise died, and her father had her remains in the same manner preserved.

"Every circumstance in Major H.'s story was peculiar, and took great hold of my imagination when, in my early youth, I came from a remote country-place to the part of Surrey where he had his residence. It was an old brick house, with pointed roofs, massive window-frames, tall narrow doors, winding stairs, dark passages, and all other approved materials for a regular haunted house. A high brick wall, with a dead gate, surrounded the garden in which the house stood; all was in character—the straight turf walks, the clipped yews, the noble linden trees, and the look of neglected wildness that pervaded every thing. On ringing for admission, the gate used to be opened by an old woman, whose appearance was enough to rouse all sorts of strange ideas in the mind of an urchin fresh from the country. She had been the nurse of the little Fyzoo, and had, in that capacity, attended her charge to England. As such she was much valued by her master, and continued to live with him till his death. I well remember her shrivelled, black face, her white hair, and emaciated form; with her Indian dress (that was in itself a curiosity to my young eyes), and her broken English.

"I believe Major H. was never seen outside the walls of his garden, and he had so cut himself off from all his relations and friends, that it was not generally known that, in that old house, he kept enshrined the bodies of his wife and daughter. His two elder children, as they grew up, went to live with other relatives, and his sole companion was an old widow lady, as

"The *Rānī*, Chunda Kowr—does she know thy secret?"

"My mother has ever had my whole confi-

eccentric as himself. In a room within his own, a bed was laid out covered with rich Indian silks, and fancifully decorated; on that bed lay the mother and child in their long last sleep; and in this room Major H. passed a great part of his time. This, I believe, is the simple narrative, but, of course, much of mystery and exaggeration was added to the stories circulated of the three singular characters who inhabited the old house, and the supernatural beings who were suspected to reside with them.

"At length, Major H. died, after about twenty years of this strange existence. His death was quite sudden, and so many suspicions had been connected with his seclusion, that an inquest was held on his body. Thus the scenes that had so long been shrouded from the public ken were thrown open: when the officials came to examine the house, the two coffins were brought to light, and this discovery of the remains of two human beings caused a further investigation.

"It was a strange scene on a cold December day, that old house thrown open to all whom curiosity might lead there; the bustling magistrates and their satellites peeping and peering into every cranny for a solution of the mysteries; the old lady, and the still older *dhye*,* flitting like ghosts about the desecrated shrine, their strange tale long disbelieved by the authorities, while there lay the unconscious causes of all this tumult—the hardly-cold body of the old soldier, the long-crumbled dust of his Eastern bride, and of their infant child. At length, the coroner was obliged to receive the real story, however incredible it seemed; and the three bodies were committed to one grave.

"As to the validity of a marriage such as the above, it was

* Nurse.

dence; she saved me from the detested Dogra alliance, and she applauds, she encourages, my present resolve."

in this instance proved; for, the succession to Major H.'s property was disputed by others of the family, on the ground of his son's illegitimacy; and the law decided in the young man's favour."

The above, and indeed many living instances, show that love is no respecter of persons, and that happy, wedded affection may exist between those of different blood. Not that I advocate such connexions; they usually entail much misery on both parties; and, as genuine conversion is rare, they must often end in both parties relinquishing their own faith without adopting any other. The natural instinct, too, that leads us to prefer our own colour is doubtless not given in vain; but there are exceptions to every rule, and I would no more despise a woman for being copper-coloured than for being born in a certain latitude. There are difficulties enough in the way of such an alliance as I speak of, and, when these are overcome, it must be by some strong motive. The people who refuse to countenance the connexion, when once legitimately formed, may give specious reasons; but pride, paltry pride, is generally "the moving *why* they do it." I well remember, at home, a respected relative of my own, who would not breathe the name of the wife a young man had taken in this country, lest his mother should hear that the lady was country-born, though no other objection could be alleged against her; while the same person was one to blackball her own nephew, because he married the girl who was the mother of his children, merely because she professed a different form of Christianity.

I know these opinions lay me open to the charge of latitudinarianism, a reproach so easily and generally cast against those

"'Tis well, my love, for I would not wed thee against thy parent's will; and, more, circumstanced as I am, girt in by danger, and uncertain of my position for a single day, I would not involve thee in my fate. Wilt thou then agree to this arrangement—that for twelve months thou shouldst remain with thy mother? It will afford time to prove whether thou understandest thyself, whether thou art prepared to be an outcast amongst thy own, and to join a people to whom thou must always feel as a stranger? The posi-

who are no great sticklers for form; and this is not exactly the place for a theological disquisition; yet let me say that what we stand up for in a religion ought to be rather the spirit, temper, disposition, that we may hope to take with us to heaven, there to be purified and ripened, than the names and badges that we leave with our dust. Goodness has an affinity for goodness, and rejoices to discover what it can love, in every clime, colour, and name; or, to use the holiest words, "in every kindred, and people, and nation, and tongue."

When shall we learn to let our own light shine, and to rejoice in the light of others, though it came not in at our own windows? When will the purity, simplicity, and magnanimity, of men like Sir Thomas More, find acceptance with Protestants? or when will they allow that Father Matthew is not a wolf in sheep's clothing—an incarnation of evil? When this better spirit prevails, and not till then, Christians of all sects will join, to show Pagans and Mahommedans that they too have a God, and that, if they do not make a parade of their worship before men, his fear dwells in their hearts, and regulates their actions.

tion will be a difficult one, it will require all thy patience, all thy virtue, and I would not deceive thee into the idea of its being otherwise; a twelvemonth will also give me a firmer footing, or it will remove me from this troubled land, and, as companion of my sojournings, or as sharer of my Kāngrā hall, thou wilt be equally prized."

"My guide, my friend, thy task is a hard one; but I believe thee to be right, and I know thee to be true; for a twelvemonth, then, I give thee up, and that twelvemonth will be to me a year of widowhood."

"And to me of anxious suspense, love: but we must now separate, I, to visit my posts, and thou to tell the *Rānī* of this interview."

Pressing the lovely girl to my heart, I hurried from her presence, and, in a fervour of delight, a sea of conflicting emotions, I hurried around Kāngrā, dashing up steep hills, across crags, and down descents that quite appalled my followers. When I returned to my dwelling, what with the excitement and unusual fatigue I had undergone, I was quite exhausted. I threw myself down and courted sleep, but it fled from my eyelids; the livelong night I tossed in feverish commotion, half sleeping, half waking, frightful dreams coming over me, and suddenly wakening me before I was well asleep.

Once I dreamt that a ruffian hand was at my throat. I started up, and perceived the shadow of a tall figure gliding from the room; I called to the sentry to stop the intruder, but it was declared that no one had entered, that the figure was a phantom of my imagination. Believing it to be so, I again laid myself down, and again was so roused. Unwilling, however, that my men's attention should be excited, and believing this time in the reality of what I had seen, I reclined the remainder of the night, watching, with my arms at hand, but was no further disturbed. In the morning, I affected to acquiesce in the prayer my servants had often made, that near my person one of themselves should always watch, in company with each one of the military sentries.

For some days nothing unusual occurred, when all at once my videttes came in with intelligence of the approach of large bodies of armed men from all directions. I had intermediately received assurance of support from Lena Singh and from several of the hill chiefs, so I desired that no opposition should be offered, but simply that *rasad* should not be supplied, and that constant and early intelligence should be given. There was not much time for further preparation; for, before night, 12,000 men sat down before Kāngrā. To meet them, I had, however,

something above 3000 trained soldiers present, and nearly as many more stout hearts, men ready to dispute every crag and every knoll, and many of them good with a matchlock at four hundred yards.

Suchet Singh, as was expected, was at the head of the host; he had another cause of enmity besides my possession of Kāngrā; I had also Māhtāb Kowr, the girl who had spurned his love and rejected the alliance with his family. To do him justice, Suchet Singh was a bold and a gallant-looking young man, a perfect soldier in appearance. He had many of the qualities necessary to a commander; a handsome person and showy habits; was much the man to gain the hearts of a rude soldiery, and in reality he was a very popular leader, the more so indeed that not being very particular himself as to *meum* and *tuum*, he looked little to the discipline of his men, regarding every thing lightly, except devotion to himself and obedience to his commands. Such a chief, having funds to pay his troops, has but to raise his banner in any corner of the East to be quickly joined by crowds.

But to my tale: a flag of truce was sent with the Māharājah's *parwānah*, and a polite, though somewhat haughty, demand for the delivery of the fort and territory. I denied not the apparent

authenticity of the order, but simply remarked that "the Māharājah had himself desired that I should make over the fort to none but himself, and that to none other should it be yielded." Replies, retorts, and rejoinders passed, but I only repeated, that my ultimatum had been given, that the Rāja's troops were distressing my country, and that I requested their immediate departure.

Suchet Singh's camp was so pitched as to half surround the rock, and to cut me off from the Jainti Māta, so that he blockaded the main entrance to the fort: and bearing a royal *parwānah*, and being himself a dignitary of the empire and brother of the Minister, I was unwilling to strike the first blow, or to appear to court aggression. I therefore put up with much insolence, and even permitted his soldiery to visit my bazārs; strictly, however, enjoining the guards at the gate to allow none but single armed men under any pretence to pass.

Suchet Singh was a bold man, I knew he was, and I watched him warily; I had my spies on him, as he probably had on me. The guards at the gates were trebled, and guns were so placed as to rake the approaches from them to the town and works; slow matches, ready lighted, were concealed under the trails. The *gōlan-*

dāzes[1] sauntered, as if carelessly, around, but each was told off to his post, and every man had his orders. One regiment was instructed to cover the guns; another, in case of need, to prevent a junction from those belonging to the enemy in the town with their brethren without; the strong as well as the weak points were looked to, and in full expectation of an early and impetuous attack, I awaited it in what quiet I could.

[1] Artillerymen; literally, "throwers of ball."

CHAPTER VII.

Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest—It is easier to get into a scrape, than out of it—Bellasis confesses himself puzzled, thereby virtually admitting that he is not a hero.

It was the month of *Chait*, the marriage season, a time of more than usual stir, when all Hindūs (and the Sikhs are degenerating into little better) are on the move, engaged directly or indirectly in the *barāt*[1] of some of their kindred. The cold season was fast drawing to a close, but a heavy shower, such as sometimes falls at this season, had revived nature. All was now sunshine; the bright orbs shone through the transparent clouds with an intensity beyond

[1] A Sanscrit word, from "*Bri*," "to choose or select:" it is the term applied to the marriage festivity, when the groom takes home the bride. In the Punjāb, beyond the Rāvi, as well as in the hills, this procession is called "*junīt*," or "*junt*."

description. All nature was revived, and wore a green, luxuriant aspect; the rising crops were rich, and the birds, both of the hills and plains, meeting on this neutral ground, lent life to the scene; the plain and hill-sides were covered with huts and tents of every hue and every shape, from the large enclosures and broad spreading *shāmiyānas*[1] of their leaders, to the humble *pāl*[2] of the foot-soldier or camp-follower, either of which class, indeed, in the Punjāb, is a lucky man when he can procure so much shelter.

On such a morn, all abroad being alive, and all within Kāngrā astir, a large and handsomely attended *barāt* pushed up the approach to the nearest gateway, attended by a hundred *burqun-dāzes*,[3] all stout, able-looking fellows, each attired in a quilted vest, with buckler at back, and on their heads heavy turbans, the folds of which were intertwined with chain-work, rendering them more sabre-proof than a helmet. Abiding by my order to the letter, they came unarmed, so far that they had neither matchlocks nor *talwār*,[4] but each bore in his hand a heavy iron-

[1] A canopy or awning.

[2] A small tent, usually a ridge-pole, supported on two forked sticks, and a blanket stretched over all.

[3] Swordsmen. [4] Sabre.

headed *lāthi*,[1] such as cattle-stealers, watchmen, and footpads carry. They pushed along jauntily and merrily, singing a marriage song not remarkable for its refinement, and shouting out the praises of the man of wealth, the liberal and beneficent *Saukār*,[2] Ram Ratan of Amritsir.

As if attracted by the unusual splendour of the *barāt*, a crowd of idlers followed at their heels, but an observant looker-on might have noticed that they were not of the usual class of *tamāshbīns*,[3] striplings and *badmāshes*,[4] but mostly stout, soldierly-looking fellows. Mixed too with them were a few of Suchet Singh's *sepatris*;[5] and as the whole cavalcade advanced to the gateway, the warder challenged and forbade the further approach of such an unusually strong party, at so troubled a period, without express orders from the governor.

With much angry altercation, and after many a threat of vengeance on the doorkeeper, a halt was called; and now the outside party increased, the idlers and lookers-on pressed forward; and before the *darwān*,[6] whose fears were at last excited, could close the gateway, a wedge was thrown on either side, and with a deafening shout of "*Wāh! Guru-jī ke fatteh! wāh! Pu-*

[1] Large staff. [2] Trader. [3] Libertines.
[4] Vagabonds. [5] Soldiers. [6] Doorkeeper.

rukji!"[1] the thoughtless warder and the double sentry were felled to the earth; the loopholed chambers on either side of the massy gateway were in possession of this select band, and the pretended *barāt* was converted into a formidable company of soldiers. The *doli*[2] was emptied of its store of arms; twenty matchlock men were thrown into either chamber, and the rest cowered under the gateway to avoid the range of the guns within, until the support from camp should arrive, which, mounted and ready, had, with Suchet Singh at their head, started at full speed from the nearest point of their lines, on the first signal shout.

That same shout had gathered the pretended stragglers inside—but it had also roused me and my men; and before those within could shew front, or with their *lāthīs* effect a junction with their friends, they were disarmed and disposed of. The artillerymen stood by their guns; the walls were manned, and Suchet Singh was received with a volley that thinned his ranks;

[1] "*Guru-ji*" has been already explained: "Wah! Guru-ji ke fatteh!" "Wah! Purakji!" is the war cry enjoined to the Sikhs by their founders, and is literally, "Hurrah for the conquering priest! Hurrah for the hero!" *Purak* is "*a man*," ("*vir*,") and is used for "*the* man" the hero of his race.

[2] Litter.

another, given still nearer, told dreadfully; and, as his column defiled to pass the causeway, knocked down men and horses, and checked the advance of the others. As, however, the enemy gained the portal, the footmen already in possession, as before agreed on, rushed out and spread right and left, leaving the front an open pathway for the cavalry.

That instant, down rattled a shower of grape from my reserve guns: another and another: men and horses rolled over with shouts and imprecations; some fled, or attempted to fly, but were borne forward by the press; others, more daring, and led on by their gallant Chief, gained the ascent, passed between the guns, and commenced slashing away at the *Golāndāzes*, while the footmen, some of whom had cleared the dangerous path, with another cry of "*Wāh! Guru-ji!*" attacked from the rear. But my *Najībs* were not idle; I threw back my flank companies, and with the bayonet soon cleared the intervals and rear of the remaining intruders. Then, waiting till the smoke should clear away, I poured in a volley of musquetry and grape, that left few but the dead and dying in our path; those that survived turned about, and, pell-mell, we followed them to the gateway, now so choked up with the bodies of friends and

foes, that the wedge removed, we could not close it. On other sides, the attacks had been fainter, and equally unsuccessful; two hundred bodies of the assailants were found, and twenty of my own brave fellows fell in the struggle.

"The die is now cast, I'll go the whole hog, and pay off my friend in his own coin," mused I, as, going the rounds that evening, I ordered a sharp look-out to be kept; and affecting to fear another attack, I ordered the lancers, Khushiyāl Singh's regiment, and one of the *Najībs*,[1] to stand by their arms at midnight. In the meantime I sent three separate expresses to the same purport, to Lena Singh. I wrote in a cipher, and to this effect:—"My friend's timely offer of aid is accepted; the honour of his servant and well-wisher has been attempted; but, thanks be to a higher power, and to my good followers, we beat back the assailants. My friend, it is now our time for attack; this night, at four *gharis*[2] after midnight (the exact minute my wise and skilful friend will know, as the planet Venus then rises,) I purpose to make a *chʻhipao*[3] on the enemy's camp, and make the Kāngrā territory too hot for him. My desire is this: that, while

[1] Volunteer, hero; a title applied to one particular class of soldiers.

[2] Watch.

[3] A sudden, unforeseen attack.

thy servant pours down upon Suchet Singh himself, who is encamped under the Jainti Mātā, my excellent friend will, with his brave troops, assail the other flank of his camp on the opposite side of Kāngrā. In the hour of need, compliments are vain; true friendship requires no smooth words; what more need be said?"

Assured that a diversion would be made by Lena Singh, and that a band of friendly hillmen would also rush down from the Jainti Mātā on the raising of my war-shout, I closed all egress as far as possible, and, earlier than usual, retired. At midnight I arose, and for the first time disclosed my intentions to my followers. Ali Verdi Khān and others attempted to dissuade me, "Not, Sāhib, for the danger's sake; our master knows we love the battle's din: but 'tis the after-consequences at court we fear."

"Good my fine fellows," I replied, "I take not the step without reflection. Cautiously and carefully I guarded against giving offence; galling as it was, I have borne with the intruders these many days in the lands entrusted to my charge; and for wrong, injury, and insult, I have returned civility and forbearance. But the business of to-day has altered matters; they have drawn the *talwār*, they may throw away the scabbard too, for the sabre of Bellasis shall

not be sheathed while they continue to defile his territory."

"We are your servants," was the reply. "It is our duty to warn, and it is equally our duty to obey."

My new *Naīb*, the successor of Nand Singh, was more of my own way of thinking. He had as little respect as myself for the minions of the court; feeling, too, that they had long kept him from his rightful place at the head of the lancers, and grateful to me for raising him from unmerited obscurity, he echoed my sentiments, and breathed out nothing but extermination to the besiegers. Sohan Lāll was a character, and ought sooner to have been brought before the reader's notice. He was by birth and caste a *Kāyat*[1] of Farrakabād, in the British provinces; of a tall and gaunt form, immense nose, sallow and long face, of awkward gait and sinister expression. He was a man who, well kept in hand, was most valuable, and, unwatched, would have been an incarnation of

[1] A branch of the low-caste Hindūs, who do *not* "forswear sack, and live cleanly;" nevertheless, they are an able and hard-working race; most of them read and write Persian; so that they, with the Brāmans, have long been the accountants and secretaries of their ignorant Mahommedan conquerors.

rascality. I had seen and heard a great deal of him before I promoted him; but, as I felt that mine was no situation in which to employ fools or cowards, I preferred to take Sohan Lāll, a foreigner, and a hardy, plucky, shrewd fellow, to hampering myself with a smoother-faced and more righteous-seeming piece of inefficiency.

The peculiarities of this man's character were many; he had been to me a kind of pay-master and accountant; and, though he was every night drunk, I never saw him at sunrise unemployed; indeed I have often called him from his books at midnight. But, at whatever hour his day's labour ended, that was his moment of recreation, the green spot of time that repaid his daily toil, when, under a dose of liquid fire, he would sink into insensibility, which generally lasted till the morning's ablutions brought him to his senses. This frightful habit nearly deterred me from promoting him; but, on his own behalf he urged that, if he was at my service for eighteen hours in the twenty-four, the other six might surely be his own. Knowing no better *Nāib*, I installed him, and, during the term of my government, he gave me no material cause to repent of the appointment.

My plan of action was this: that an hour

after midnight, Ali Verdi Khān, with his Mūltānis on foot, Khushiyāl Singh's men, and a wing of the first *Najībs*, should move quietly out of the two gateways, and should stealthily and in small parties creep towards the picquets of Suchet Singh's own immediate encampment; a few should file off to the extremities of the camp, but the mass should lie concealed opposite the Rājah's tents, as near as possible, without risking discovery; and, from what I afterwards heard, they might that night have walked quietly up and cut the ropes of his sleeping-tent over his head, for such was the fatigue and want of caution after the morning's attack, that less than the usual vigilance was observed, and all were silent and sleeping.

Just as the star appeared above the horizon, the head of my column of lancers emerged from the gateway; and, truer to the signal than myself, at the same moment the war-cry arose from the opposite direction, and the shouts of Lena Singh's men, and the cries of those he attacked, rent the air. The alarm given, the picquets and guards opposed to us turned out; my infantry took up the signal and pushed on; but, as I had half a mile to cross with the lancers in a dark night, on very uneven ground, I lost the opportunity of being able to take advantage of the

first surprise with my horsemen. However, as it was, we did much mischief; we drove in the guards, slaughtered many, half-armed, and just aroused from their sleep.

Cowering from the chill air of night, with their whole heads enveloped [1] in their *chaddars*[2] and *kamals*,[3] many heard no other sound than the death-stroke of the sabre that sent them to eternity. Two new guns, on which Suchet Singh prided himself, we captured, and should have taken himself prisoner, but, being a late sitter, he was only retiring, when the first cry of battle rung in his ears; and to his exertions and his personal bravery, as much as to my not having moved the cavalry five minutes sooner,[4]

[1] Eastern and Western notions of comfort are very different: an Oriental begins his wrappings-up at his head, decreasing them as he descends, till his feet and legs are left bare: if he possesses but one piece of the cloth for covering, that one piece is given to the head. This practice makes the natives bad watchmen, especially as it never enters their philosophy to keep themselves warm by exercise.

[2] Sheet. [3] Blanket.

[4] Bellasis means that he ought to have allowed time for his cavalry to cross the plain; he had told Lena Singh that the onset was to commence exactly as the planet rose; but he did not issue from the gateway till that time, thus allowing the enemy to receive the alarm from Lena Singh, before Bellasis himself was clear of the fort.

it was owing that his camp did not suffer more material mischief. However, such as was the blow, it sufficed to make the enemy evacuate the territory, and the next morning's sun saw little of Suchet Singh's proud array; his rear-guard, still within sight, tempted my hot bloods to follow, and even those who were for peace the last night, having now twice tasted of blood, were eager for the chase; but, I answered, "No, they have had enough; my object is gained; I would now rather help them on their way, and further their departure." I then gave orders to look through their deserted camp, bring in any wounded that might have been left, and to bury or burn the dead.

These urgent duties fulfilled, I hastened back to share my triumphs with Māhtāb Kowr, though, since we had been on the footing of lovers, her company was a pleasure in which I had thought it right to indulge but sparingly. During the alarm she felt on hearing of Suchet Singh's approach, I had tried to soothe and reassure her, and, when necessarily absent, kept up continual intercourse with her and the Rānī, by means of trusty messengers and preconcerted tokens. So great had been the terror caused to Māhtāb by the threatened Dogra alliance, that she could only attribute the attack to a design against herself; and she had conjured me, in the

most solemn manner, rather to take her life, than to allow her to fall into the power of her enemy.

I told her that the abettor of suicide was, in my creed, as guilty as the murderer, and that, with whatever intent, were I to abet her death, I should go down to my grave with the weight of blood upon my head. What was in my power, however, I did, and told off a select party, who were ordered to stand by her and the Rāni; and, on the enemy gaining a certain point, they were to effect their retreat from the citadel by a subterranean passage. All had been quietly and effectually settled, and I had little fear for her safety; but a presentiment of evil hung like a cloud over her young brow; she knew, she said, some event was about to happen, but could not realize its nature.

From the day Suchet Singh's force appeared, the music of her voice was still; and during the short, sharp conflict at the gateway, the strings of her heart had well nigh snapped, when she learnéd that the foe was within the gates, and heard peal after peal, and volley after volley, close to the entrance of her concealed chamber. But when she found that I had gone out to meet the foe, beyond the walls of the fort, and thus felt herself without a protector should the

enemy gain admission, all self-possession forsook her; and when, in the exultation of victory and the pride of the hour, I rushed to lay my laurels at her feet, I found my heart's treasure extended lifeless on the floor.

The first horror of that moment I will not affect to describe: my grief was, however, soon turned into joy, when I discovered that she had only fainted. It was long before I could restore her to consciousness and to the certainty of her safety, but at length she recognised me, and understood my assurances that the danger was over. The innocent creature crept closely to me, and said, "Now I'm safe; the world cannot hurt me, but oh! leave me not alone again." Gently I re-assured her, and gradually, the slight colour that tinged her lovely cheek recovered its place, and, with the buoyancy of youth and innocence, she forgot her late alarm sooner than I did myself.

Now came the most difficult part of my no easy game; how was I to explain my conduct at court? The truth I knew would benefit me very little there; and, when my chief judge was to be the person I had most deeply offended, of what avail would be the best plea? I therefore determined to attempt no defence, and simply wrote that Rājah Suchet Singh had

made an attempt to seize the fortress; that, as in duty bound, I had withstood him, and, by the Māharājah's *iqbāl*,[1] success had attended my efforts. The replies I got both from Rājah Dhyān Singh and Faqīr Azīzūdīn were harsh and peremptory; I was desired forthwith to give over charge to my *Nāib*, and to attend at the presence.

Chānd Khān wrote differently:—"My master has done well, and at heart and secretly the Māharājah rejoices, but the Faqīr has been gained over by the Rājahs, and, naturally afraid of them and their superior influence, he has deserted my patron. But be of good cheer, *sāhib*, obey no order given by any mouth but the Māharājah's, and rely on it he never intends Kāngrā to fall into the hands of the brotherhood. Again, let thy servant beg to be recalled, to share my master's perils: here my office is irksome, and in truth I have many temptations; my hand is better than my head; Chānd Khān may be misled, and may unthinkingly disobey; he would avoid such peril. To say more would be disrespectful."

Chānd Khān's letter gave me some uneasiness. I was averse to recall him, and yet, if he was to

[1] Prosperous influence.

remain at Lāhor against his will; he was not likely to prove a very useful Vaqīl; I therefore resolved as soon as possible to gratify his wishes, but the fulfilment of my intention was prevented, as will hereafter appear, and to elucidate matters I must now return, for a little, to Lāhor.

With spies in every direction, and paying liberally, Rājah Dhyān Singh was acquainted with all that passed in the Punjāb. Little then as Chānd Khān was aware of it, his former occupation, his haunts and his companions, all were known to the minister, who was intent on seizing him at the time he took my service, when, seeing his ability and spirit, he spared him, as a good instrument for his own purposes: but when, to his astonishment, the Rājah found the solitary and unfriended Mūltāni proof against his bribes, the robber and bravo true to his trust, that moment the great man determined on his destruction, and in a *Pathān*, by name Dāod Khān, found a fitting instrument.

Of the same tribe as Chānd Khān, this man affected to have taken a great liking to the Vaqīl, who, thoughtless and open-hearted, soon fell into the snare. In an hour of pretended confidence, Dāod Khān opened his heart to his friend, and told him how pleasant was his line of life, how easy to destroy the rulers of the

land and to ride in their places. Chānd Khān's secret nearly came to his lips, but he restrained himself, warned his companion that he was a government servant, and could not again listen to such language, or associate with such a person.

"Indeed!" replied Dāod Khān; "has the trusty Vaqīl so soon forgotten his calling, and lost all taste for roving?—a word in my friend's ear," and, putting his mouth close to his terrified companion's ear, he whispered, "Is then Māyob Khān forgotten? does not my voice recall those jolly times when we held our meetings under the forest shade, and carved our way through the land?" Chānd Khān, thus pointedly reminded, called to memory that the man before him was a villain who had been turned out of his band for cruelty and murder; for some years he had disappeared, and time and change of name had prevented recognition by the keen eye of his former captain. Feeling himself thus in a villain's power, and panting for release from his present sedentary pursuits, the victim, after much persuasion, and after binding by an oath the fictitious Dāod Khān, (now to be called by his proper name of Māyob) that he should shed no unnecessary blood, was induced to consent to join him on certain freebooting expeditions. It was

while thus tempted, and before he had committed himself, that he addressed me, and so urgently begged to be recalled; but the false step once taken, he was silent, and I had begun to think him again contented with his lot; when who should meet me one day in my morning's ride, but Chānd Khān, on his road from Lāhor! The reason of this unexpected and unwelcome apparition, my Vaqīl shall give in his own words.

In reply to my irritated questions, he answered, "Yes, my lord, thy servant has erred; he has deserted his trust, but the Supreme daily forgives his creatures; my master will then pardon his slave, whose heart is as ever devoted, and if his head deceived him, and he was led away by a traitor, he is still no less faithful to the interests of the noble Bellasis." He then told of Māyob Khān's trap, and added, "Feeling myself at the mercy of a villain who would have sold his brother for a ducat, I unwittingly engaged with him against the enemy I hate. For a time the miscreant kept our compact, shed no blood, and attacked only Sikhs; but before long he was tempted by the approach of a party of Boras, who, as my lord knows, are the most honest and the most enterprising merchants of Western and Upper India. These men he waylaid, their principal he slew, and plundered them

to the amount of several thousand rupees. What ensued I know not, and care not, but in open *durbār* I was taxed with the murder, and Māyob Khān was produced as a *Mīrkhai*, as participator in the scene, and witness of my guilt.

"Most truly I denied all part in the transaction, for I was not only absent, but had used all my influence to prevent the attack. Before, however, I was aware that murder had taken place, I received from Māyob as my share some *pashminās*,[1] which had all private marks; one of these I was wearing when accused, and several of the Boras and their attendants swore more or less positively to its identity. No further evidence was required; Māyob Khān was made a *Jamadār* of Ghurcharas, and I was told that if I confessed not within twenty-four hours, I should be put to the torture. For once, they spoke truly, for I was led to an old tower, and there heavily ironed and chained to the wall; twice during the day was I again questioned, and it was hinted that if I gave up my lord's service, my pardon and promotion should be ensured. I spurned the base offer, and told them to work their will. Again, the next morning, I was questioned, offered the same promises, and

[1] Soft shawls, made from the wool of the hill goat.

the same threats were held out. I replied as I had done before, when I was immediately thrown down on my face, my legs and arms extended to their utmost stretch, and, with a heavy weight on my shoulders and loins, I was left to my own thoughts.

"How long this lasted, I know not, for I fainted, and when I came to my senses, I found the jailer, Māyob Khān and others, around me, rudely removing my irons, and offering me water, a quantity of which had been thrown over my head and body. For a day I was nourished and cared for, when again I was told to confess, to implicate my master, or to bear worse afflictions. I replied that life to me was worthless, and begged that they would end my days, and not harass me with questions, that I could not and would not answer. Again I was tortured until life seemed extinct, and fearing that they had overdone their work, and that their victim was now beyond their reach, every exertion was made to restore sensibility, but it was long before my senses returned, and I awoke to a sense of my situation, and to the horrors that awaited me.

"The jailer alone was then present; to my surprise he spoke kindly and soothingly, and Sikh as he was, I found in Rām Singh a kind and an

active friend. He told me how unwillingly he had been made the instrument of my sufferings, and that he had now arranged for my escape; that my servant, with a litter, lay at the time within a hundred yards, and that if I had strength for the undertaking, he would that instant carry me to it;—'the way is now clear,' said the good man,—'another opportunity may not occur, for I'm not altogether trusted.'

"Faint and weary as I felt, I hesitated not a moment; he raised me in his arms, and in an hour I was safely ensconced in a hiding-place within the suburbs of Lāhor. My horses I sent on, and the moment I could bear the jolting of a litter, I quitted the hateful city, and have been preserved, once more, to reach the presence of my master. My friend and preserver, Rām Singh, accompanied my flight; though old, and a Sikh, he is still strong of arm, and true of heart; I have therefore ventured to promise him my lord's protection."

While Chānd Khān spoke, a fine old grey-beard rode forward, offered a military salute, and tendered his services. I desired him to be *hāzīr;* and to Chānd Khān I addressed myself severely, telling him that by his folly he had added doubly to my difficulties, and had not only implicated me in his crimes, but by leaving

me at such a juncture without a *Vaqīl* at the *durbār*, placed me in the position of a rebel.

"Not so, my lord," was the reply; "feeling that a storm was brewing, and uncertain as to my fate, I had prepared a document with my lord's seal (and I need not say that *real signatures*[1] are easily procurable in the Lāhor *bazār*) appointing as *Vaqīl* the trusty and well approved Lāla[2] Sukhun Lāl in room of Chānd Khān, recalled. The Lālā is a smooth spoken and a wily man, my lord, and will better match the hangers-on at the *durbār* than your less cautious servant before you."

"On my word, Chānd Khān, you are a free actor, as well as speaker; but these matters

[1] Forgery and perjury form a regular and profitable trade in all large Asiatic cities. The reader must remember that, as already stated, the seal is very usually affixed to a document, instead of a written signature. When thus employed, wax is not used in the process; the seal is covered with the glutinous ink used in Eastern writing, the paper is moistened with the tongue, and the seal stamped upon it. The operation, when dexterously performed, leaves a neat impression, a black ground with the characters in white. Those who trade in the preparation of documents keep the requisite seals, of every age, ready for use, and others can be had at a short warning. Practice makes the same individuals very expert in the mysteries of erasing, interlining, and other such craft, used by more civilized nations.

[2] Schoolmaster, writer, secretary.

must be discussed hereafter; for the present you are under charge of Aliverdi Khān, from whom you will take orders, and who will bring you to *durbār* at the third *pahar*.[1] I turned away my horse, and left Chānd Khān astonished at his reception, and at the cold and ungracious manner in which he had been met, after the services he had performed, and dangers he had undergone. I, too, was sensible that I had treated him harshly; but openly to recognise his acts would

[1] In the East, the twenty-four hours are divided into eight watches of three hours each, commencing, among the Mūsalmāns, at sunset, with the Hindūs at daylight. Each "*pahar*" contains eight "*ghurris*" or subdivisions, of a trifle more than twenty minutes each. The difference in the time from which they begin to count makes great confusion. "In night attacks, ambuscades, sallies, &c. to be concocted some time previous to their execution, between a Mūsalmān and a British officer, if the latter has ordered the former to carry a particular operation into effect on *Mungul kee rāt*, or *Tuesday night*, his expectations will evidently be anticipated one whole day, as the Mūsalmān, according to *his* notions of time, will do the duty required, upon Monday night." So observes Dr. Gilchrist; and I have seen a lady, expecting visitors the following morning, make arrangements with the "*maître d'hôtel*" in the evening, for *to-morrow's* breakfast, which consequently the man supposed to refer to the next morning but one—thereby occasioning a dilemma, "more easily imagined than described."

be impolitic, and I felt moreover all I said as to the manner in which he had committed me.

No sooner had I returned to my dwelling than I received a *parwāna* from the *durbār* to the following effect: "You are again ordered to the presence; your accounts are in arrear, and it is necessary they be adjusted; you will then be permitted to return to Kāngrā. Your *Vaqīl*, Chānd Khān, is a culprit; he has been convicted of murder, and has escaped justice, taking with him his jailer; they must both have fled to Kāngrā; you are ordered to give them up, to place them in irons, and with all despatch to send or bring them to the presence. Sukhan Lāl is a good man, and he is permitted to attend the *durbār;* you acted wisely in appointing him; you had been wiser to have done so sooner. Consider the orders herein contained as imperative, and not to be slighted, but fulfilled to the letter; what more need be said?"

This is more than I expected, less violent than I looked for, thought I; and, while I was turning over in my mind how I should act, Chānd Khān was brought before me, as I had previously ordered. I read to him, and those present, that part of the *parwāna* that concerned himself, telling him that I felt interested in his

fate, and believed he had not willingly injured my interests; but that, as the servant of the *durbār*, I was bound to execute its orders, and that he must therefore be placed under restraint until I could procure a more favourable injunction in his behalf. My decision caused much surprise, and many around buzzed out that it was not a time to cast away friends, or to lose the services of good *shumshers;* but I ordered off the prisoner, and proceeded to the ordinary business of the day.

That evening, when all was quiet, I moved over to the quarters of Aliverdi Khān, and desired him to leave me alone with Chānd Khān. My little *Vaqīl* mounting the high horse, assumed the air of an injured man; but I bade him have done with foolery, and reflect on my position and his own; on the little means I had of effectually protecting him, and the critical position of my own affairs. He soon came to his senses, and replied: "I knew my lord was not really angry with his servant, but that, before strangers, he deemed it politic to trample on his faithful well-wisher—let it be so; sacrifice me if you will; Chānd Khān will live or die the servant of Bellasis."

"Truly I mean you well, Chānd Khān, but how to aid you is the difficulty; and as I have

neither the desire nor the ability to strike for independence, I see not how to extricate either myself or you from the web around us."

"The sword, my lord, is your remedy; the meshes are not to be unravelled; but they can be cut. When he whom they call Māharājah first stood in his father's stirrup, his power was less than yours at this moment; he had every thing against him; and the boy, Runjīt Singh, beset by enemies, by doubtful friends, false allies, and open foes, at the head of the weakest of the twelve *misals*, had less room to look for the supremacy than you have now: he owes entirely to his own decision, promptness, and wariness, the position he now holds. He had no such hold as Kāngrā in which to place his family and treasure; but, with the mere sheepfold of Gujrāolī as his centre of action, and every man's property as his aim, he soon became, by dint of mere energy, the lion he is now. My master's purse is as heavy as his was then, his troops as numerous and better disciplined, his own fame and ability greater, and his name for faith and fair dealing how much superior!

"Form then a league, my lord, with some of the older *Surdārs*, who are chafing at the daily tyrannies and resumptions of the usurper; raise

but your banner, and you will excite a flame from Kāṇgrā to Dera Ismael Khān. Kāshmīr is ripe for revolt: Mūltān has yet scarce fitted on the yoke; Bahāwāl Khān chafes for the possessions he has lost; Fatteh Singh Aluwālā scarce acknowledges the *durbār's* superiority; these all want but a leader of name, and a hope of recovering their lost independence and equality, to take the field. To many of the Sikh *Surdār's* you might unite the Rājpūts of the hills, the Mahommedan and mixed tribes of the westward."

"Your counsel is always bold, Chānd Khān, but I love not to play the traitor. Tell me, however, what cause of offence have the Chiefs you have mentioned received? Give me, in short, a sketch of the histories of any with whom you are acquainted; but stick to facts; let there be no amplifications."

"Good, my lord, I will commence with my own country, Mūltān, of which I need not say all *Pathāns* feel deeply the wrongs, and that, at the raising of Sarfarāz Khān's banner, every son of the faithful would flock around him. A *pultan*[1] now holds the town and citadel, and with permission from my lord, and the aid of

[1] Regiment, or rather brigade.

the Dāodpūtras[1] on the opposite side, I could, in twenty-four hours, be in possession of both. And has not Bahāwāl Khān good reason for hatred to the Sikh? Were not the fertile fields and rich lands bordering on Mūltān the old possessions of his family? Did he not hold also the farming of Dera Ghāzi Khān? And has he not been stripped of every *bigah* of land on this side, driven to the borders of the desert, and saved from entire absorption only by the interference of the *faringīs*? Bahāwāl Khān burns for vengeance, and could, on an emergency, turn out a thousand horse, and thrice as many foot, all hardy and trusty soldiers, accustomed to toil, to brave the horrors of the desert, and, as guides or as sportsmen, to pass for days and nights through untrodden and unwatered wastes.

"Next we have the Khān of Mamdot; and

[1] "*Sons of David,*" literally; derived from *pūtra*, a son, and *Dāud*, David; the term by which the ruler of Bāhawalpūr and his clan distinguish themselves, tracing their pedigree to an ancestor in Scinde, whence they emigrated about a hundred years ago. The Dāud-pūtras are a tall, fine-looking race; but all the "foregone conclusions" of physiognomy are sadly at fault, among the venerable, manly, intelligent, courteous, mild-looking *ruffians* that we meet in the East. The most amiable-looking Hindu I ever met was a t'hug.

does not Kūtūb-ū-dīn Khān[1] feel that the broad lands of Kasūr, the rich city and its hundred towers, have been wrested from him by the Sikh? That his father dwelt in peace and in honour where now the Sikh dogs revel? That his brother fell by the knife of an assassin, directed by the enemy that aimed at conquest, by sowing dissension, by treachery, and by guile? But still better, if Kūtūb-ū-dīn fails us, we have his nephew, Fatteh Khān, the son of his elder brother, the murdered Nizām-ū-dīn Khān, and the rightful heir of Kasūr and Mamdot. He has taken the service of his hereditary enemies, in the vain hope of, by their aid, supplanting his uncle, but his heart is now sick with hope delayed. He has many secret well-wishers, for his uncle's rule is a hard and an ignorant one, and we might, in a day, put Fatteh Khān in possession of Mamdot, and, through him,

[1] Chānd Khān here goes beyond the mark: Kūtūb-ū-dīn was brother to Nizām-ū-dīn Khān, a Pathān soldier of fortune, who gained Kasūr by his sword towards the end of the last century. In the time of Akbar, while Kasūr was still under a Hindū Rāja, seven hundred Pathān families had been permitted to settle there, and eventually became paramount in that district, subject, however, to the throne of Delhi. But, though the Mūsūlmān power in Kasūr is of so old a date, the present ruler, as above stated, is of a recent family.

wield the resources of its territory in our behalf.

"And have we not Sher Singh to our hand? The acknowledged son of the Māharājah, the idol of the army, the boon companion of the *Surdārs*, a good man in the front of battle, and one to be easily led away by well-timed persuasions: he knows he can never be Māharājah, and he fears for his own safety in the event of Runjīt Singh's death. His opportunities for preparation, too, are good, for, holding almost all the lands[1] on the other side of the Sutlej, and mixed up with the *faringī's* dependencies, he can, almost unobserved, collect his means; as also can Fatteh Singh Alluwālā, who feels more gratingly his present treatment by Runjīt, in that they were turbaned brothers; that at one time the power of the present Māharājah was less than his own, and his friendship and alliance courted; now, however, his *jāghir's* are being seized, resumed, or assessed, and no bounds are set to the extortion employed, but the fear of throwing him into the arms of the *faringī*.

"All I have mentioned are surely ours; Lena Singh, too, is your friend, and has committed

[1] "*Holding almost all the lands.*" Here again the little Mūltāni exaggerates: Kowr Sher Singh's *jāghīr*, on the left bank of the Sutlej, would never have been above a lākh and a half yearly.

himself; and in the son of Desa Singh, you have the best, the wisest, and the most honest of the Sikhs; a man who, among a race of dissolute debauchees, employs his time and his money in works of usefulness, and deeds of charity. The hill-chiefs then, are they not yours? Have you been so long among them, that their Rājahs have not let you into their confidence? And where the rightful chiefs are clanking the chains of the brother Rājahs, or eating the bread of dependence, have not their faithful clansmen told you tales of their master's woes, of their hopes and their fears?"

"Really, Chānd Khān, you are exceeding the bounds of my desires; I wanted not to know who are traitors to the Māharājah's salt, but the history, the rise of each of the principal *Surdārs*."

"My lord is cautious, and he is right; but Chānd Khān feels strongly, and he cannot but speak bitterly;" and stretching out his arms and his legs, "look at these bruises; can I forgive them, can I forget? No, never, while a Sikh dog exists, or while one drop of blood runs in the veins of Chānd Khān!"

In such like conversation, in soothing his irritated mind, and in gathering from him, as I best could, the state of affairs and parties at

Court, I passed the night; and, desiring him and Aliverdi Khān to be silent as to my visit, I returned to my own abode, and to my solitary couch.

CHAPTER VIII.

The tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things —Scandal is a dainty dish—Peace has her victories, as well as war.

"Confound Chānd Khān!" muttered I, as, tossing on my bed, I thought over my position; "confound the meddling blockhead! he must be sacrificed—but no—that will never do; he's true, I feel he is, and it is myself that am to blame for leaving him to be tempted in that hotbed of vice. But I should like to know how my late visitor gets on; how the gallant Suchet Singh bears his defeat; and whether he will venture to proclaim it, in all its truth, and to its full extent, at court. I suspect not, and that the brotherhood will, for their own credit sake, for the present pocket the affront. I may, therefore, sleep soundly for a time, but must reckon that a heavy score is against my name when opportunity offers. 'Tis well to look to the bright side; so begone, dull care, and come to my eyelids,

gentle sleep." Thus, half talking, half dreaming, between sleep and wakefulness, I saw the tinge of morn before my eyelids were effectually closed; shortly after my usual hour, however, I rose, and pursued my accustomed avocations.

In reply to the *durbār's* orders, I stated that Chānd Khān was in custody, that in my own opinion he was innocent of the crime alleged against him, though culpable in other respects: and I begged that, as my servant, I should, as was the custom, be permitted to punish him myself.[1]

For my own part, though I affected ease, and before others bore confidence on my brow, I felt there was much to trouble me. I satisfied myself that I was in the right—that I had in no point exceeded my duty, or departed from the spirit or letter of my orders. Lena Singh's alliance was a favourable point, his character standing so high, and his weight in the *durbār* being considerable; to whatever extent I was implicated, he was to a greater, for I defended but my own; he came out of his way to attack the royal troops.

[1] Every petty chief exercises judicial powers in his own territory, even to taking life; the government is rarely troubled with a reference, except in case of treason, infringement of the border, or offences committed by one state against another.

I kept up my friendly communications with the good *Surdār*, visited him, and received him in return at Kāngrā. His appearance and bluff air had more of the soldier than the courtier or the philosopher. He was about thirty-five years of age, of stout, athletic build, dark complexion, middle stature, and had large whiskers, as well as the usual Sikh beard; with him I had many interesting conversations.

Chānd Khān's tongue was a never-ceasing engine; he would tell me the tales and legends of the early wars of Runjīt Singh; how he had beguiled this chief, outwitted the other; how he had got possession of Lāhor; how he first failed and then succeeded against Mūltān; how narrowly his army escaped destruction in his first attempt on Kāshmīr, and by how little prowess he finally acquired it; by what arts he removed the Pathāns from Kassūr; and how he was, even at that time, devising the acquirement of Peshāwur: what little bowels of mercy he had ever displayed towards his own kindred—witness his conduct towards his own mother, and to Sada Kowr, his mother-in-law, one of the chief instruments of his rise.

"She was a wonderful woman, my lord," said Chānd Khān; "valiant in battle, wise in *durbār;* she was a wonder among the ignorant

and besotted Sikhs. You know that when a mere girl, her young husband fell in fight against him, the father of whom she raised by the alliance with her daughter, and who requited her by plunder, long imprisonment, contumely, and death; for to her proud spirit a prison and a grave are much alike. Witness, then, the treatment of Sāhib Singh of Gujarāt, his paternal aunt's husband; see indeed how he and his father before him threw off, as old garments, the ministers and the tools of their several acts as they progressed, and with what base ingratitude they forsook, betrayed, or destroyed the companions of their early fortune."

"Giving all license, Chānd Khān," said I, "to your Pathān enmity and Mūsalmān zeal, I cannot but think you undervalue the Sikhs generally, and the Māharājah especially."

"Wait, *Sāhib*, till you have seen the effects of their rule as I have—till you have traced the line of their desolations as I have done—till on your own body you have borne the weight of their tyranny as I have done; and then you will be better able to correct or to estimate my opinions."

"You and your race have suffered, Chānd Khān: and I too, my friend, have I not tasted the cup of bitterness at their hand? But we

must be just, and separate the evil and designing from the noble and the true."

"And so I will, my lord, when I find the latter, but 'tis hardly among their chiefs I am likely to do so. Lena Singh is the best of them, and he chiefly shines because he's one star in a very black night."

"You are severe, Chānd Khān: but do you give the Māharājah no credit for the order and submission into which he has brought his country? For the security of life, for the protection of trade, for, in fact, substituting one master and one *hūkūmat*[1] in the place of a hundred chiefs and a thousand tyrannies?"

"If he had done all you say, or half, I should indeed call him a blessing to this land; if desolation is order and submission, you are right, my lord, for vast tracts have been abandoned and left uncultivated, owing to the severity of his rule, and to the people being literally sold to the farmer of the revenues. The boasted security of life means little more than that the Māharājah does not himself sentence capitally; but it would be better if he did, than by maiming all thieves, whether young or old, whether new to vice or hardened in its scenes, putting them all on a

[1] Dominion, jurisdiction.

footing, raising every man's hand against them, and leaving them no resource except robbery.

"But what protection is there for life in the Punjāb, except in a slight degree for the great? Does my lord mean that if I, or any other poor man, was to-morrow to be cut down in a street in Lāhor, there would be inquiry made? Not at all, unless indeed the *Kotwāl* could turn it to account by laying my death at the door of some one who could pay. But, is the poor man's death, whether by open or secret murder, ever avenged, ever thought of? And is it not worse than murder, that every marauding scoundrel of a *Surdār* should be permitted to maim God's creatures,[1] even for wrong committed, much more, as is too often the case, on mere suspicion, or on false accusation? How then is the Māharājah sole monarch, when all around him can thus act? Ay, and can also plunder at will the merchants you talk of his protecting; that is, by making them pay arbitrary duties, and detaining them at will at their *chokīs*[2] and *ghāts*, and harassing them with every vexation."

[1] A portion of the system mentioned in the preceding note, which gives, tacitly at least, to every Surdār, police jurisdiction in his own lands. Mutilation, as stated in the body of the work, is the common punishment in cases that do not meet a capital sentence.

[2] Station.

"How do you reconcile the prosperity of Amritsir and Lāhor with what you have just said?"

"Very easily, *Sāhib;* the court and camp are the life-breath of Lāhor; remove them, and it again becomes a desert. The annual visits of the Māharājah to Amritsir, its sanctity as a place of pilgrimage, as the centre, in short, of the Sikh religion, are reasons for its importance; it is then the *one* place of collecting the hill produce for diffusion in the plains; the manufactures of Kāshmīr are prepared on orders from Amritsir, and the different productions of the Kāngrā and Mandī hills are there gathered and exchanged for the produce of the plains. But I have heard, and my lord knows much better than I do, that while the whole trade of the Punjāb is confined to these two cities, and while Mūltān, Kapūrtalla, Pāk-Patan, Kassour, Khem-Kharan, and a hundred places of former note, have fallen away to mere villages, or to heaps of ruins, there are innumerable cities in Hindūstān, little inferior in wealth to Amritsir and Lāhor; and, it has often been said within my hearing that, since Ambālā and Ludiānā have sprung up under the *Faringī* fostering, the wealthy ones of our two cities would be glad to move themselves there, could they carry away their treasure, or escape plunder and total confiscation for thinking of so doing."

"Yes, I hear that traders, above all others, prosper under British rule, but that the constant changing of systems and of custom regulations tries their patience and their pockets too; and, let me tell you, their custom-house officers, no more than ours, or any in the world, are immaculate. On the other side of the Sutlej, you'll hear as many or more complaints on this head as here; you will find also that the police of the *Faringī* is far from perfect, and that, though the British do not maim, they let out thieves and robbers after they have caught them, because they won't confess, and, instead of punishing them doubly for lying as well as stealing, give them lessons on quibbling. Then they build huge jails,[1] and thrust into them and mix up people of all classes; honest men who have been unfortunate, and villains and desperadoes. Indeed, in my opinion, there is little to be said in their favour, further than that by their stronger

[1] There is much room for improvement in the British jails; wherever subordinate officers of any nation or colour, but especially in India, are not diligently superintended, abuses will follow, despite the most rigid laws and regulations. No edicts will supply the place of vigilant, personal inspection, by the British functionary; and the jack-of-all-trades sort of work, expected from a civilian, does not favour this needful attention.

arm they keep their territory more submissive than the Māharājah does his. On the other hand, if we look calmly around us, we shall see in the Punjāb much to applaud, even though there is too much to reprobate."

"Ah, *Sāhib*, saving your presence, and emboldened by your candour, your servant would represent that *those* were the days, when the chivalrous Bābar rode through the land. He was not of our race, but he was a true Pādshāh.[1] Then there was Akbar, and Aurangzeb, patterns of monarchs; they permitted no idolatrous dogs to pollute the land; and Māhmūd, my countryman, the gallant and brave child of the bride of cities, Ghazni the impregnable, the maiden fortress. You have doubtless heard of Māhmūd, my lord, how he rooted the unbelievers from the land, and how he planted the crescent throughout the bounds of the five rivers; and how, when he would not be bribed to spare the idol of Somnāth on the Western coast, he was rewarded by the showers of precious stones that fell from the shattered head of the demon figure. Those were the days, my lord; India was then a happy land, every Pathān was a gentleman, rode his stout horse, and was followed by his

[1] King.

bold retainer: we are now poor adventurers, having to seek our bread in the most distant lands, in the farthest South, to be there enticed into service, cheated of our pay, and then not permitted to enforce our fair demands.

"Yes, *Sāhib*, that English Government that you so justly stigmatize is a strange medley of inconsistencies. Old Shumsher Khān, who returned the other day from Kurnal, tells me that there his people were clean cheated, and when they merely sat *dhurna*[1] on their chief, and did

[1] The good old fashion of Brāhmans and others sitting *dhurna* at their neighbours' doors, and there fasting or threatening violently to destroy themselves, is falling into disuse in British India. There are various sorts of *dhurna*, but the object of the act always is, to bring the guilt of the victim's blood on the enemy or oppressor; and with the same motive does the *chūrī-mār* (vide ch. iii. p. 72) wound himself. "Cutting off the nose to vex the face" is a marvellously common practice. I once saw a poor, half-witted creature, who fancied the magistrate would not render him justice, approach that functionary, put a petition into his hand, and, without leaving a moment for him to open the paper, rush into a well close by, at least thirty feet deep. Fortunately he was only bruised, and was glad to catch the rope that was let down to draw him out. The *Pathān dhurna* is generally of a more intelligible kind, and directed to the injury of the defendant instead of the plaintiff, the troops of Amīr Khān, (already mentioned in the notes to chap. i.) more than once *put him to the question.*

not even offer violence to him, the English came down in great numbers, cut them up, and thought it was a very brave act. We too have suffered much at their hands; they slew the noble Rhemat Khān, and allowed the base Oudeans to usurp our possessions, and but the other day they spoiled Amīr Khān[1] of his hard-earned conquests; but withal they are better than the Sikhs, whom I spit upon; the dogs, false, treacherous, cowardly dogs; no, they are not dogs, they are a cross of the hog and the wolf; are they not greedy and gluttonous, with a dash of the Turkey-cock, loving display?"

"Pooh! Chānd Khān, moderate your wrath, you are talking nonsense, and I should not listen to such language; have you nothing of a different stamp to tell me? Do you know no good man among the chiefs? are none of the greybeards, those fine, venerable-looking, old fellows, are none of them respectable?"

"Truly I know none, my lord, and if a good trait or an honest man is to be found among the

[1] I wonder Bellasis allowed the little Mūltāni to talk after this fashion; for the real state of the case the reader is referred to notes on chapter 1st above referred to. Perhaps, however, Chānd Khān meant that Amīr Khān was deprived of a respectable and lucrative profession, when his marauding propensities were restricted.

bastard race, it is among the lower order, and the few who cultivate their own fields, instead of plundering their neighbours. But what could you expect when you think of who and what they were, even the best and bravest of them? Shepherds, ploughmen, and artisans were the most respectable; and they, to swell their ranks and add to the terror of their name, allied themselves to the miscreant outlaws of all classes that the troubled times threw on the land.

"There's an old adage, my lord, that put a *faqīr* on horseback and he'll ride to the devil; and what better was to be expected than that upstarts should be tyrants, and that hungry wretches, falling pell-mell into the rich granaries of their masters, should wallow deep in sensuality? I've often thought of all this, and tried to excuse them, my lord, when I've come across a decent fellow with *Singh* to his name; but no, it would not do. I soon found he was a Lion but in name, an ass and owl at heart; or I found him more than corroborating my opinions of his own people—all show—all talk—boasting and bragging—living on lies—trusting to their heels and to their wits, rather than on their swords and spears, sharp and long though they be. No, Sāhib; they are not soldiers; they are well enough as robbers, they are hardy, but they

cannot fight, and they won't fight, and their *Rāj* will crumble from their hands, at the first appearance of an enemy, more easily than it came to them."

"You are really scurrilous, Chānd Khān, and I'll not allow you to proceed; tell me rather something of the nature of the country, its soil and produce, its divisions and peculiarities. Tell me any thing you know of these matters; but first inform me of the rise, course, and outlet of the noble rivers that intersect and enrich the land, or rather might do so, for I observed little or no irrigation from them as I crossed the several ferries, and still less appearance of traffic was there on any one stream. Tell me, how are the wood and the rice, and the ginger and the dyes, and the iron of the hills, brought down to the plains? And by what means is an exchange of the produce of the different districts effected?"

"My lord asks as many questions as the old Māharājah, and as fast. I'm not a *Saudāgur*,[1] *Sāhib*, but what little I do know is at my master's service. Small though his knowledge be, who loves better than a Pathān to diffuse it? The rivers of the Punjāb, my lord knows, are as the name indicates, five: the Jhilam, the Chināb, the Rāvi, the Beyha, and the Nai or Ghāra,

[1] Trader, merchant.

called by the *faringīs* the Sutlej, which girdles it to the southward. They are all of different natures, and run through countries of various soils; some are deep and rapid, others slow and tortuous; all are, for hundreds of miles, navigable for boats of ordinary size. But who will build boats under such a government—who trust his capital to such spoilers?"

"There you go again, Chānd Khān; you prevent me from talking with you; I seek information, you always fall into abuse. *Hal rūksat ast.*"[1]

Thus taken aback, my late Vaqīl made his *salām*, and in a huff retired.

I now endeavoured to my utmost to draw out he resources of my territory. My people confided in me; they had lately witnessed my ability to protect them, and had early noticed my desire to do so. I now began to reap the benefit of my early toils; *bazārs* rose up at Kāngrā, and, had I burned with such ambition, I might even have called a large *ganj*[2] after my own name; but I rather preferred that its owner should enjoy the honour and the profit of his own cash, and as each new trader, Saukār, or petty Bunya came in with his tray of sweets, I accepted the *nazar*, cheered him with encouraging words,

[1] You are dismissed. [2] Market-place.

and, where possible, with more substantial aid; so that I soon drew the most wealthy men from Jambū, Nūpūr, and other hill states; and the former city, which, in the troubled days of the Sikh rise, was a refuge to the commercial community of the plains, gave place in importance to Kāngrā. In short, though I was not averse to feats of arms, and in my hotter youth had loved the battle-field, it was now my ambition to build up a city of peace, an exception to the rule of those around me, and commemorate my name rather by preservation than destruction.

But there were some few drawbacks; and, as might be expected, I had to contend with petty interests and the arts of designing men, endeavouring to impose on me, and induce me to further their ends, in reward for what they were doing or might do in locating[1] themselves and friends in my *bazārs*. An increasing portion of odium was also of course incurred from the neighbouring chiefs, who considered me as a robber, stealing their fat geese; though I told

[1] The Sikhs are very jealous of *rāiyats*, or others leaving their lands and settling elsewhere; and, on the other hand, hold it a point of honour not to give up even notorious offenders who take refuge with them. The rules proposed by Bellasis regarding thieves, settlers, and others, have, to my knowledge, been attempted, and with some success.

them they were welcome to entice all Kāngrā to their abodes; that I neither punished, mulcted, nor in any way attempted to deter seceders, or inveigle settlers; that, in short, I contented myself with letting things take their own course, protecting all, *actually within* my limits, and letting them know they must not look to me until they entered, or after they left my territory; that, unlike other *Surdārs*, who considered it a point of honour to shelter all settlers, and to harbour, without question, the worst characters, or even ostentatiously to protect them, I openly set my face against such system, and proclaimed that I wanted no thieves, and would yield up to justice all offenders fairly convicted of heinous crimes in other states.

And further, in attempting to put down theft, I strove hard to begin at the beginning, and to catch and punish the receivers; which proceeding caused great excitement, and affected the interests of some of the most *respectable* and well-to-do citizens, who, I found, openly sold the produce of other's plunder, and were not considered the worse for so doing. To break the neck of this system, I proclaimed that the receiver should be treated as the thief, and after warning had been given, and a wealthy man convicted, I sent him round the town and territory for three successive

days in irons, seated on an ass, proclaiming that he was sentenced to work in irons for a specified time, and that all others so offending should be thus punished.

There were certain classes that I found lived on the vices of their neighbours, bearing a fair face to the world; they hired out robbers, taking the principal part of the booty when successful, and affording subsistence to their tools, when the times were hard on their calling. I found gangs of fellows united in the closest ties, with gradations of rank, faithful to each other; each having their part, some to inquire, others to effect the object desired, but the most skilful and oldest always to distract attention, and to turn the scent in wrong directions. The system of every *Surdār's jāgīr*, or estate, being independent in its police relations, was a great help to such expert and experienced plunderers; by hiring some of their crew to the neighbouring chiefs, and by paying their way liberally, they could trace stolen property to any house or village, *but* the one to which it had been taken. I endeavoured to procure the names of the leaders of these parties, to buy over some of them, and to play them against each other. Had my stay at Kāngrā been prolonged, I had hopes of some success, but, as will appear, my schemes and my

castle-buildings were cut short, and, sudden as had been my entrance on such various duties, more sudden was my temporary return to comparative leisure, and to the luxurious idleness of a military life.

"What do you think, Chānd Khān," one day I said, "of the foreign officers in the Mahārājah's service? I ask you, because you speak plainly; what is your estimate of their value to the sovereignty of the Punjāb?"

"Shall I speak freely, *Sāhib?* They are not your brethren, you say, but you would eat with them, and you dress alike, and hold the same creed; not indeed that I could ever understand what was the *faringī* religion; having no temples, saying no prayers, considering no time, people, or food, sacred, or impure."

"We differ more than you think, Chānd Khān; and *faringīs*, as you call us, do worship God; but our religion tells us to do it in the heart and in our closets, not before men, and in the market-places; it tells us more, that our conduct should be such that we may not fear the eye of God or man to be on us."

"*Sāhib*, such doctrine is good; but, to be candid, I have witnessed little of such practice; and, though I have seen foreigners fall into the customs, and join hand and heart in the tyrannies

and vices of the Sikhs, I can recollect no instance, saving my master's presence, and always excepting him, of a *faringī* objecting to any office or any duty, because it entailed on him work derogatory to his *izzat*;[1] they have rather been foremost in offering for such tasks where others have held back; and when you count their wealth, what they own, and what they nominally receive as pay, and then look to the style in which they live, you will perceive that they have at least quickly learnt the Sikh system of government."[2]

"And not the Mūsalmān, Chānd Khān?"

"Oh, yes, *Sāhib*, I know that we, too, had our day; but we would do better now, if the reins of government were in the hands of the Faithful, and the worst of us, in the worst times, were angels compared to the locusts of to-day."

"I thought that General Avitabile, at Vazirābād, and Mr. Harland at Gujarāt, and General Ventura at Multān, were pattern-men?"

"So it is the fashion to call them; but see if they don't chop off men's hands and feet, and hang up, with as little reason as the worst of

[1] Honour, or rather "point of honour."

[2] A scene like that here described occurred either to Lord Auckland or his predecessor.

the Sikhs. They have the advantage of administering districts naturally rich, (and you are aware that the general fertility of the Punjāb is a vulgar error); they have also the benefit, as foreigners, of being supposed by the people to be more protected by the court, and by the court to be supposed to be cared for by the British. At first sight this would be thought a small matter; but when it is considered how much value Runjīt Singh sets on the alliance, it may well be supposed that he keenly scans each link of the connecting chain; and somehow or other, the foreigners have all managed to keep up communication with Lūdiāna. Harland was once their nokar,[1] and may be so again; and both Ventura and Allard affect intimacy with their magnates."

"But tell me, how do they stand with the army, and the army with them?"

"The matter has been so managed as to afford them little influence; they have instructed regiments, which have been removed and replaced by others sent to be taught, and in like manner taken away. Those employed on revenue duties have few or no troops with them, or the military commandant is pretty much independent, and often has the virtual mastery, by the *tankhwāhs*

[1] Servant.

he holds on the revenues, and the troops he has to enforce them."

"What do you think of the new system of discipline?"

"Why, *Sāhib*, I think, as do most others, that it's all fudge; well enough to look at, and for display, but useless beyond this. The Sikhs have never used it yet, and never will. If ever they are induced to charge, it will be in a tumultuary manner, and the straight parade-line system will be entirely forgotten or despised in the hour of action;[1] they themselves say it will do for parade, but not for battle; you may therefore judge of what use all the drilling has been. But it has one good effect; it has called attention to the state of the army, their arms, and their physical appearance; and as the troops of their neighbours have always been worse found and numerically inferior, the Sikh power has spread; but in the iron battalions of the *faringīs*, they will find other stuff, and the day that the two armies meet in the field, the Sikh *Rāj* will end; their very discipline and conceit will ruin them; their affectation of equality will seal their destiny."

[1] I believe, for every practical purpose; and the zealous and able officer who lately served in the Sikh army against the Eusafzais is convinced of the absurdity of attempting to enforce European discipline in the field.

"Yes, I hear that the English are highly disciplined and efficient troops."

"They are lions, *Sāhib;* each soldier is in himself a host, and their equipment and their guns are so unlike the tag-rag and bob-tail of our Māharājah's turn-out, that it is a pleasure to go to Ludiāna to see them."

"You are certainly not an indulgent witness for our master; but don't repeat these opinions of yours, or say you favoured me with them."

"*Bu ,chashm, Khudāwand;* your servant does not repeat; he holds sacred his master's thoughts."

"*Bahla,*[1] Chānd Khān, you have leave to retire for the present:" and I was again left to my cogitations, as to whether he was a croaker, whether the Sikh government was yet strong and vigorous, or tumbling to pieces, and inviting destruction. "He is right in the main," was the conclusion I came to.

But I must now introduce my new *Vaqīl*, Sukan Lal, to notice, the more so as he has a deal to say. His letter, after more than usual compliments, and telling me that I was a sun among the stars, a brilliant lamp in a dark night, and so forth, ran thus: "Yes, *Khudā-*

[1] Very good.

wand, thy slave, though he cannot call himself an old servant, may with truth be ranked among the most faithful of well-wishers; and, having been exalted to great dignity, he will endeavour to evince that he is not altogether unworthy. Light of a dark land! the times are hard; every man is watching his neighbour, and no one knows whom to trust. The Māharājah's mind is confused, his usual placid demeanour is changed, and he looks troubled and careworn. By day and by night the emissaries of my lord's enemies are around him; they beset him at all hours, and respect not even his times of exercise and recreation.

"But yesterday it was that, riding with his *sawāri*[1] in the neighbourhood of Shālimār garden, as we turned a corner, a troop of thirty or forty petitioners, attired as hill-men, suddenly wheeled round from the side of the road, and completely closed the passage of the train, throwing themselves on the ground, and rending the air with their cries of justice against the tyrant Bellasis, (meaning my lord.) Other and more pointed expressions were used, but respect for my master forbids repetition. The Māharājah's *ghurcharahs* and *bhāyas* affected to drive them away, but it was evident to thy ser-

[1] Train of attendants.

vant that the whole was a prepared affair, and that the affected sympathy of the courtiers for the pretended oppressed *raīyats* was a mere trick to lead his Highness to mistrust my master.

"I loudly exclaimed so, or at least denied that any of the complainants were from Kāngrā; but, in the storm of voices, my words, I fear, fell unheard on the Māharājah's ears; redress was promised, and the ruler of the Punjāb seemed troubled; he spoke not, but care was evidently at his heart, and I fear that evil will therefrom arise. Thy servant has already represented in what false colours Rājah Suchet Singh painted his defeat to the *durbār*, and how he produced numerous evidences to show that, while in all peace and reliance on your hypocritical messages, he was watching in obedience to his orders, you had come down with an immense army (which you had been long and secretly collecting) and had certainly repelled him, but that his few troops, though sadly outnumbered, had caused great destruction in your ranks, and that he only wanted some reinforcements to wipe off the stain the royal banner had suffered.

"You are further said, my lord, to be in close intrigue with all the hill Rājahs, and that even the chief of Little Thibet is a partner in

the league against the Māharājah. His Highness is a wise man, and does not believe all he hears, but he appears staggered; and particularly during the last few days, his *mizāj* seems affected. The royal train was once ordered for a progress to Kāngra, but, for some cause that I could not ascertain, it was countermanded. The game seems now to be to separate Lena Singh from your interests, by offering him your post, and an expedition on a large scale into the hills is talked of, for the purpose of completing the subjection of the remaining Rājahs, and bringing Kūlū, Mandi, and others to their senses; but, whatever be the ostensible object, Kāngrā will be the real game, and the Rājah will so manage that his Highness shall not go, but that Gulāb Singh or Suchet Singh shall command the force.

"As may be expected, there is considerable excitement abroad, for it has been unusual of late for the royal army to meet with defeat, or for an Amil to oppose the *durbār's* orders. In the *bazārs*, however, the real motive of my lord's resistance is pretty fairly understood, and the moneyed men always end by wishing Amritsir and Lāhor had each such a ruler as Kāngrā. My lord shall soon again hear; his servant is vigilant; this petition already exceeds the bounds of respect."

The same post brought a *parwāna* with the seal of Faqīr Azīzūdīn: it was brief and caustic, disapproving of my harbouring *convicted* felons, desiring me to yield them up to justice without further demur, and myself to proceed at once to Lāhor, or that measures would be taken to enforce obedience. With the above order came no note of compliment from the *faqīr*, as was his habit to send me, and it was clear that he had either been gained by the Rājah, or that fear restrained him from his former friendly offices.

There was more truth in the rumour of a hill confederacy than, at the time, I was even myself aware of, but it will not do to bring in the important events now at hand at the tail of a chapter; a new one must be devoted to show what my several neighbours were doing, while I was brushing up my arms, seeing that every article of store was in abundance and in its proper place.

During this time, I more than ever sought to make myself acquainted with the affairs and condition of the Punjāb generally, for I saw that the tide was setting against me, and felt that I could not remain long at Kāngrā. I studied also the characters of my followers, and by familiar and kindly conversation sought to gain their confidence. I found the system but partially

answer, and have indeed, throughout my career, found no point more difficult to attain, than to combine so much of strictness as should prevent people imposing on me, with that forbearance that should attach them to my person; which, while it convinced them I was ready to meet all their real wants, and to a certain extent their desires, should make them feel I was not to be made a tool of, and would invariably punish all attempts to impose on my indulgence; for I felt that what was *parwastī*[1] for the time to the individual, was possibly ruin to him in the end, and certainly misery and oppression to those within his control. Consistent and firm demeanour was therefore my aim, with whatever success it was carried out. Orientals indeed are strange and fanciful creatures; the same man that would watch your sick bed untired for nights, or expose himself to destruction on your behalf, would cheat you, pilfer you, lie to you, and daily and hourly neglect your orders. The true philosophy then is to cultivate their better qualities, and make the best of their defects; treating them with what indulgence is possible, respecting their religious prejudices, but, at the same time, obliging them to respect yours, and not to treat you as if you

[1] Special favour and indulgence.

were an unclean animal: keeping them strictly to their duty, even though it be a matter of routine, mindful that, though false alarms may deaden vigilance, dishabitude does so much more certainly, and that what men are not taught in ordinary times to do as a matter of course, they may, in time of need, look on as a hardship.

But I have lectured too long, and must return to more stirring matter.

CHAPTER IX.

A dose of history, which the reader may read or not, as he pleases.

The current of my story has been a good deal clogged by feeling that in the Punjāb I am, to many of my readers, treading on a perfect "terra incognita;" as my object is, therefore, to edify as well as amuse, to be intelligible as well as interesting, I will even venture to give another half chapter of downright history, straightforward matter of facts, as far as I know.

I left off in my historical outline with the partial consolidation of the Sikh confederacy on the death of Ahmad Shāh.[1] Some notice was also

[1] Ahmad Shāh Abdāli was standard-bearer to Nādir Shāh, when the latter invaded Delhi, A.D. 1738: he served with a party of his own tribe in the Persian army, earned great distinction, and was in high favour at the time Nādir Shāh was assassinated. Upon that event, Ahmad Shāh returned to his own country; and, accidentally intercepting a large despatch of treasure from India, appropriated it to himself, and set up as King of Afghanistān. He made eight cam-

given of the condition of the people, and the relative proportions of Sikh, Hindū, and Mūsalmān, with an estimate of their military force, which was entirely, I may say, the creature of Runjīt Singh's genius; if, after all, it can be called ability and foresight to throw aside the weapon that won him his laurels, in order to try one that cuts both ways, and in the use of which he was inexperienced. I am inclined to consider that the Māharājah would have shown more foresight if he had devoted the same attention that he did to European tactics, to rendering his troops really efficient after their own fashion; if he had erected fortifications around Lāhor and Amritsir on European models, and there planted his guns, encumbering his troops in the field with but a few and perfectly equipped light artillery. He had models near at hand, and even furnished him by the British; but Oriental penuriousness prevented his doing the thing properly.

paigns against India, but they were merely military inroads, showing great valour and skill, but tending to no permanent results; his great victory over the Mahrātas, at Pānipūt, saved India from a dynasty of that people. Ahmad Shāh died in the prime of life, of a cancer in the face: it is said he applied for a cure to a holy man, who told him he could remove the disease, but that, with it, life would cease.

"It sounds well to talk of a hundred guns; yes, a hundred half equipped[1] are surely better than twenty-five in better style." So reasoned the King, and his courtiers told him all he did was right; and thus, while he affected to be able to bring sixty guns into the field, he could not really, after one day's march, have manœuvred with twenty. Every troop has its gun-carriage agency, while every *Surdār* in charge of guns makes very much what arrangements seem to him best; and although each gun has eight horses attached, and is, according to their no-

[1] Runjīt may not have been so far afield in his estimate, considering the people he had to deal with; seeing that, among a half civilized race, the *moral* as well as *physical* effect of artillery is to be considered. In Ghizni there was a certain great gun, which had never been fired, even in the memory of that respectable individual, "the oldest inhabitant." When Dost Mahammed was about to collect his revenues, the old gun used duly to be brought outside the city; and this manœuvre, without firing a shot, sufficed to bring in the defaulters. Doubtless it was the "moral effect" that used to be considered by a brave and worthy Hibernian Officer in the Bengal Artillery, who was working his guns against a refractory fortress, and who, while watching with delight the progress of his shells through the air, and congratulating himself on his successful aim, used to call out, "Well! if that isn't a pretty shot! I hope it didn't hurt any body!"

tions, well looked to, the wagons and tumbrels are left to the tender mercies of horned cattle.

Can any one conceive a greater absurdity? Is it not like tying up one leg of a man going to run a race? but so it is, and a very good sample it offers of the *bundobust*[1] of the military establishment. Eight horses I was told were put into the gun traces, as the country was generally heavy and roads bad, but when I asked, "Why not horse your tumbrels too?" the reply was, "Bullocks do for them, or, in case of need, we can pack the ammunition on camels." The horses throughout the service, both in cavalry and artillery, are undersized, and wanting weight either for a charge or for efficiency in draught, and when it is considered that many of the *sowārs*, supplied by the *Jāgīrdārs*, are six and eight anna men, it may be conceived how ill mounted they must be, and how poorly fed the cattle; for the British, I believe, give twelve annas a day to their Irregulars, and yet have a difficulty in securing their efficiency.

The infantry, then, of the Punjāb is their chief dependence, as *regular* troops, but as to how much *they* are to be relied on, I have already given my opinion; and having seen a good deal of

[1] Arrangement, contrivance.

their *Surdārs* and commandants, the only wonder to me is, how they achieve such good stage effect on parade, and how, with so much want of regimental domestic economy, their *paltans* hold together for a day. There is no such thing as regular pensions for wounds to individuals, or reward to their families for falling in the service; a disabled soldier is permitted to hang on, to sit in his lines and draw his pay, or part of it; when he dies, there is an end of him and his claims. Furloughs are given for two months of the year, generally in the rainy season; during these months the troops receive full pay, though the system of Dost Mahammed and others was to calculate the year as having ten months, and to pay only for so many, considering the men as defunct or in a state of hybernation during the rest of the year. But to my historical sketch.

Ahmad Shāh cannot be said to have ever held the sovereignty of the Punjāb; through his lieutenants he ruled Kāshmīr, Mūltān, and Sirhind, but the proper country of the Punjāb was never for any continued period under his control. More than once the Afghān Governor of Lāhor was restricted to the bounds of his capital, and it was only by repeated incursions, and by the terror his personal prowess always

carried with it, that the Abdālli monarch continued to keep a footing south-east of the Atak. In 1773, Ahmad Shah died of a cancer in his face, and was succeeded by his son, whom, as Prince Taimur, the Sikhs had already driven from Amritsir. He was of a different temperament from his father: content with his western possessions, he was unwilling to continue the struggle with the wild and daring Sikh leaders, then rising into notice. During his reign, therefore, of twenty years, the land was nearly at peace, and would have been entirely so, had the Sikhs been content to leave unmolested Mūltān, Mankéra, and the other Pāthān possessions.

It was during the early days of the Sikh temporal fortunes that the family of Runjīt Singh first came into notice.

Desu, a Jāt cultivator and owner of three ploughs and one well,[1] is the first of the family noted in Sikh annals. His son, Nodh Singh, married the daughter of Gulāb Singh, a Zamindar of Mājethia, who had taken the *pahal*,[2] and per-

[1] "*A well of land*" is the characteristic measure in a country where land is valueless without artificial irrigation. "A well" is about twenty-five acres.

[2] "Pahal," the ceremony of initiation into the Sikh religion. I have never myself witnessed this rite, but give what I believe to be a correct account. "A person having

suaded his son-in-law to do so too. Nodh Singh, therefore, on his marriage, forsook his peaceful occupations and joined as a trooper the *misal* of Kapūr Singh of Gujarāt, called the Fyzullapureea *misal*. He died in 1750, leaving three sons, when the eldest, Charat Singh, joining with his brothers Dul and Jodh Singh, raised a banner of their own, and from being mere Dhārwees or highwaymen, they soon established

shewn a sincere desire to renounce his former opinions to any five or more Sikhs, assembled together, in any place, as well on the highway as in a house of worship, they send to the first shop where sweetmeats are sold, and procure a small quantity of a particular sort, which is very common, and, as I recollect, they call *Batūsa;* and, having diluted it in pure water, they sprinkle some of it on the body and into the eyes of the convert; whilst one of the best instructed repeats to him, in any language with which he is conversant, the chief canons of their faith, exacting from him a solemn promise to abide by them the rest of his life. This is the whole of the ceremony. The new convert may then choose a Guru, or preceptor, to teach him the language of their scriptures, who first gives him the alphabet to learn, and so leads him on, by slow degrees, until he wants no further instruction."—*Asiatic Researches*, vol. i. page 293.

The same authority, in the preceding page, states that the character used by the Sikhs is called, in honour of their founder, "*Guru Mookhee,*" *from the mouth of the preceptor;* probably the correct etymology of "*Gurmukhi.*"

a *derah* or camp of their own, and emulated the proudest.

The wife of Charat Singh was from Gujraoli, a small village not far north of Lāhor, where, through her influence, her husband gained permission to build a small mud fort, as a stronghold for his family, and the plunder acquired in his expeditions.

The vicinity of Gujraoli to Lāhor was an eye-sore to the Afghān Governor, who, hiring the services of a band of Sikhs, moved out to destroy the rising fortress, his allies forsook him, he was defeated and scarcely escaped with his life. This act was the main cause of bringing down Ahmad Shāh's prowess on the Sikhs in 1762, when he so signally defeated them near Sirhind in the action, called by the Sikhs the Ghulu Gora, or bloody field; the losses of which day they so well revenged the following year, when they slew Zyn Khān, the governor, and sacked Sirhind, leaving it to this day a ruin.[1]

[1] The neighbourhood of Sirhind witnessed more than one conflict in the early Sikh times; but it was in A.D. 1762 that the town was utterly sacked and razed, and its governor slain. Most desolate is the present aspect of a city which appears to have had much architectural splendour, and which stands in a beautiful country, adorned with splendid groves.

At this time, the Sikh confederacy was divided into twelve *misals*, or brotherhoods; the leaders were universally men of low birth, jāt cultivators, shepherds, or artisans; but they were stirring fellows, and each had won his way from small beginnings to the head of swarms of marauding horsemen. The leaders were followed by their relations and personal friends, and, of course, the greater was the success of each, the more numerous became his band.

The affectation of equality was not restricted to the *Surdārs*, but each horseman in his own allotment considered himself as an independent functionary, if not a Prince: he was tied to his chief by the bond of mutual self-interest, as long as he remained in that service; if displeased, he changed his banner, and found many ready to welcome him.

The *Surdār's* duty was to lead in war, to arbitrate in peace; his share of all conquests was allotted by general acclamation, in proportion to his supposed merits and the means he had personally brought to bear; the subdivisions were then made. The leader was treated with a certain respect, which again much depended on his personal character, and no one considered himself bound by any law, but his

own pleasure, to look to or regard the head of his community. Some of the chiefs are said to have been able to muster ten or twelve thousand horse, and their combined strength to have been more than seventy thousand. Six of these *misals* are now merged in the Khālsa state, and parts of the other six have fallen to pieces or been absorbed by Runjīt Singh or his father, Māha Singh.

Charat Singh's *misal* was originally the weakest, but the fame he acquired by his successful defence of Gujrāoli raised his name, and doubtless at the bi-annual meetings during the *Bysākhi* and *Dewāli* festivals at Amritsir, his voice carried with it the weight that the bold and rising man always has in a popular assembly.

Charat Singh seems to have worked quietly and warily; biding his time, picking up recruits, and acquiring for himself and his *misal* a name in the confederation. No greater proof of the consideration he was held in can be offered than that of his being called in by Brij Rāj, (the son of the Rājah of Jammu) when he rebelled against his father. And, though Jai Singh of the Ghannī Misal, an older and more powerful leader, was engaged on the same side, Charat

Singh was the life and soul of the enterprise that he joined, as is proved by the fact that, on his sudden death by the bursting of his match-lock, the party whose cause he had espoused at once gave up the contest.

Charat Singh was forty-five years old when he was thus killed, in A.D. 1774, leaving three lākhs of possessions, and a strong body of horse to his youthful son, Māha Singh, whose mother assumed the reins of government for her son; and, confederating with Jai Singh, Ghannī, caused the rival leader, Jhanda Singh, Banghi, to be assassinated.

In 1776, Māha Singh married the daughter of Gajpat Singh of Sindh; and, about the same time, gained great reputation by the capture, after a siege of some months, of Rāmnaggar, owing to which, and other acts, many *Surdārs* from the Banghi and other Misals joined him. In 1780, he turned his attention to Jammu, where Brij Lāl, with whom he changed turbans, had now succeeded his father, but who, by his dissolute and debauched habits, was unable to make head against his youthful but wily turbaned brother, and therefore lost his town and territory. The plunder of Jammu gained Māha Singh many enemies; not only the Banghis,

whom he had long been supplanting, but his old ally and guardian Jai Singh, Ghannī, was now jealous and angry.

To propitiate Jai Singh, it is said that Māha Singh, in the midst of his exultation on his late conquest, went to Amritsir as a suppliant, with a *nazar* to the old chief, who, stretched on a *chārpaī*, answered to his protestations of affection and gratitude, that "he wanted no more of the Bhagtia's (dancing boy's) soft words." Māha Singh's blood was roused; he swore revenge, and well he requited the day's insult. Unable alone to cope with the Banghis, and his new enemies the Ghannīs, he leagued himself with Jūsa Singh, the exiled Chief of the Rāmgureas, who had lately been driven from his possessions by the united Aluwālā and Ghannī Misals.

Jūsa Singh, a bold man and himself burning with revenge, gladly forsook his occupation of petty plunder, in the Doāb of the Ganges and Jamna, to return to a wider field of action, in conjunction with so promising a coadjutor as the youthful and victorious Māha Singh. Leagued with Sansar Chānd of Kāngrā, who had lately been by a stratagem deprived of his principality, Māha Singh and Jūsa Singh gave battle to their opponents, slew Gūrbaksh Singh, the son of Jai Singh, and so utterly defeated his army,

that he was obliged to yield to a humiliating peace.

The foregoing events occurred in 1782, and in 1785, Runjīt Singh, the present Māharājah and son of Māha Singh, was married to Māhtab Kanwar, the daughter of Suda Kanwar and the deceased Gūrbaksh Singh, whose widow had managed to usurp the possession of her father-in-law Jai Singh, to the injury of his two surviving sons, Nidhān Singh and Bāgh Singh.

The last act of Māha Singh's life was consonant to the hard, faithless, and grasping policy by which the family has risen. Gujar Singh, the Gujarāt Chief, died, leaving his principality to his son, Sāhib Singh, who, though married to Māha Singh's sister, was not thereby safe from the young conqueror, who demanded tribute, and, being refused, besieged his fortress, which, however, made a stubborn resistance. After some months' siege, Māha Singh was seized with a violent illness, and was carried to his own abode at Gujrāoli, there to die at the early age of twenty-seven, after having for ten years administered with great ability and prudence his territory, independent of his mother, whom he put to death for intriguing with a *Brāhman*, as did Runjīt Singh his mother for similar conduct with his minister, Lakhpat Singh.

Runjīt Singh was only twelve years old when he succeeded his father Māha Singh; for five years his mother-in-law, Sada Kanwar, who was now head of Jai Singh's Misal, governed in his name; and, in concert with his mother and the paramour of the latter lady, managed the affairs of her son-in-law's territory; but, in 1793, being then seventeen years of age, Runjīt put his mother to death, got rid of Lakhpat Singh, and assumed the management of his own affairs, for many years, however, still much guided and aided by the able counsels of Sada Kanwar.

During the years 1796 and 1797, Shāh Zamān, the blind, old ex-monarch of Kābūl, now residing at Lūdhiāna, who had then lately succeeded his father Taimur, twice invaded the Punjāb, and even entered Lāhor; but it was never the policy of Runjīt to oppose himself to equal numbers, or indeed to the chance of reverse; he early went on the principle of avoiding all risk, and though by no means wanting in personal courage, he looked closely to the policy of all his acts, to the probable result—the cost and the gain: the sheep-skin caps of Ahmad Shāh[1] were therefore still remembered,

[1] The Abdāli body-guard wore sheep-skin caps, the sight of which more than once turned the day, as their vicinity betokened that of their master, who was much dreaded by

and Runjīt deemed it more prudent to leave the field of the Punjāb for the invader, and to try his own fortunes beyond the Sutlej.

While, therefore, Shāh Zamān was acquiring a temporary hold of Lāhor and its neighbourhood, Runjīt was gaining permanent conquests in the still weak and unsettled neighbourhood of the Sutlej and Jamna; and on the Shāh evacuating Lāhor, and leaving it to the mercies of the three debauched *Surdārs*, Chait Singh, Mohur Singh, and Sāhib Singh, it struck Runjīt Singh that he would gain possession of it himself; he did so with but little difficulty, and actually had the skill to gain a *sanad* for its occupancy from the Afghān monarch.

Now holding the ancient seat of government, and strengthened by his lately acquired conquests, he already assumed supremacy; and, though fiercely opposed by his old enemies the

the Sikhs, and whose rapid marches enabled him to keep up with them, light-footed as they are. I am not aware why Ahmād Shāh's body-guard wore a head-dress not common among the Afghāns; so far as I can learn, the Jamshidis and Suni Hazarahs are the only tribes subject to the Afghāns who now wear the sheep-skin caps, which are always differently shaped from the genuine Kajjar, or Persian cap, being much lower. Turkomāns, especially those of Khaiva, also wear sheep-skin caps, but high, wide at the top, and without the burd-i-shamsher.

Bhanghis, and also by the Pathāns of Kassūr, and his uncle, Sāhib Singh of Gujarāt, he daily acquired new strength, making each day's work help in the business of to-morrow, soon obliged the Kassurians to pay tribute, and entirely put out the light of the Banghis.

The chiefs of the different *misals* now began to fear each for himself; and seeing every day bringing new actions, seizures, and forfeitures, they attempted to unite and protect themselves, but the Māharājah was already too strong for them, for under Sada Kanwar, having the whole strength of the Ghannīs on his side, and having exchanged turbans with Fateh Singh, Aluwāla, and broken up his chief enemies, he was now beyond the reach of successful attack.

Runjīt was already paving the way for his conquests in the hills; as auxiliaries and as friends to one or other of the mountain chiefs, the Sikhs were now well acquainted with those regions, with what was worth taking and the way to get at it. Sansar Chand, by his inroads into the plains, brought destruction to himself; and most of the others, by their own feuds, hastened their ruin.

The dissensions among the sons of Taimur now prevented further danger of Abdāli invasion, but rather left to the mercy of the Sikh

the possessions of Menkera, Peshāwar, Mūltān, &c. to the seizure of which the new monarch early turned his attention. But nearer and more pressing objects detained him from immediate execution of his plans. In 1807, he took Kassūr, and the next year again moved across the Sutlej, and was only stopped in a wide sweep of conquest by the British Commissioner, Mr. Metcalfe.[1] The Māharājah weighed well the course he should take;[2] but, being

[1] Afterwards Sir Charles.

[2] Anent the Lāhor ruler's cogitations, an anecdote may be mentioned. Sir Charles Metcalfe had been some time at the Court of Lāhor, when he received orders from his own government to propose to Runjīt Singh to remove his troops to the right bank of the Sutlej, and to leave the Sikh States on the left bank of the river under British protection. The proposal was made with great delicacy by Sir Charles one evening when he was seated with the Māharājah on the roof of the palace. Runjīt made no reply, but, descending from the roof, mounted one of the horses that were always kept ready-saddled, and rode for a short time very violently on the *maidān* (open space) in front of his residence. On his return, he replied to the proposal, by expressing his astonishment at the impudent assurance of the British government in making it. The English, he said, had refused to receive the independent Sikh States under their protection, which had some time before been solicited; and now that he, not being so scrupulous, had, at a great expense of blood and treasure, ex-

offered very liberal terms, no less than a guarantee of all his possessions acquired up to the beginning of the discussions then pending, and seeing with his own eyes that the British, though few, were superbly equipped, that they were fresh from a long tide of victory, and despised his mere bands of predatory horsemen; having also the great Holkar a refugee in his camp as a specimen of the prowess of the English; he took the wise course of binding himself by treaty to respect the present boundary, and in no way to molest the Nishānwāla, Shāhid, and Phulkia Misals which had placed themselves under the British protection.

tended his power over them, the English very coolly tell him to turn out, and make over charge to them! He wished to know what kind of friendship this was? Sir Charles could not deny the justice of the Māharājah's argument, but very judiciously urged the policy and expediency of yielding a point that would make the British Government his firm and lasting friend; and reminded the King that, being secure in this quarter, he might be at liberty to extend his conquests in more profitable directions. His Highness took the hint, conceded all that was required of him, and, to the latest day of his life, expressed his obligation of the suggestion, assuring Sir Charles Metcalfe, on every occasion that presented itself, of his grateful remembrance of the good advice he had given.

By this treaty, Runjīt Singh was guaranteed in the property of more than twelve lākhs of rupees of possessions on the left bank of the Sutlej, a country, by its extent and position along the banks of a great river, capable of producing ten times the then revenue. It has, however, little profited by the long interval of peace; and though external war has ceased its periodical visits, internal feuds, unadjusted rights, insecurity of every thing most dear, and the absence of any one interested in upholding a better system, have kept the banks of the Sutlej in a state of comparative desolation. The tribes inhabiting them, bound by no natural ties to their Sikh rulers, discovering in them nothing to respect, and indeed being accustomed to see the despot of to-day a fleeced and houseless wretch to-morrow, have attended little to the cultivation of their soil, but have preferred the more idle occupation of tending cattle.

Thus every village has its herds, which wander and graze almost at large, trespassing even on the states of other chiefs, until some petty cause of offence arise, and then commences a long series of affrays, assaults, seizures, and reprisals, until such a state has arisen that no chiefship but has its blood-feud with every vil-

lage or petty state around it, causing a frightful condition of insecurity, and rendering unsafe the movements of the most peaceful member of a community, he being liable to seizure in retaliation for some offence, real or imaginary, of another individual subject of the same state. A similar system very much exists throughout the Punjāb, except that the trans-Sutlej possessions are further from the seat of government, and that there is a delicacy on the part of the Māharājah to move troops in that quarter; that the people know this, and hardly consider themselves as subjects, thereby rendering more clogged the, at no time very smooth, wheels of government.

The treaty with the English had, in a measure, quieted Runjīt Singh's mind; for, although for a time suspicious as well as angry, he could not but admire and respect the government that gained conquests and acquired possessions only to give them away to people having no manner of claim on them; and when he saw that the Pattiāla, Jindh, Nābha, Khytal, and other chiefs were not only treated with all respect and consideration, but that they were neither mulcted, nor in any way called upon even to pay a share of the common expence of keeping up the general government, that neither fines nor *nazars*

were taken or demanded from heirs, nor loans exacted[1] by the English in their necessities, he could not but then believe that such a government was really in earnest in its assertions that the peace of the frontier was their only object, and the well-being of the Sikh people their single desire. And when, not long since, the Aluwāla, Mamdot, and other smaller chiefs threw off the Lāhor yoke[2] and vainly courted British aid, the Māharājah had another proof of the justness of the opinion he had first formed, in the face of the counsels of his *Surdārs* and other advisers.

In 1809, by a stratagem, he acquired the mountain fastness of Kāngrā; in 1810, he besieged Mūltān, but was bought off by the governor, now left to his own resources by the Afghān monarch; in 1812, he took the hill fortresses of Bhembar and Rājaori, with the territory attached, and the next year, by a bribe

[1] Loans have two or three times been taken from the Patiāla and Nāba chiefs, who, with great astonishment, found that the Company repaid the full amount, with interest.

[2] In the last note but one, the fact is referred to, that the chiefs mentioned in the text sought admission within the British pale, which was refused, though that government used its influence to obtain terms for them with their own chief.

of a lākh of rupees to the governor, gained possession of the fort of Atak, commanding thereby the passage of the Indus. In 1814, he signally failed in an attempt on Kāshmīr, and entered on no further aggression on a large scale until 1818; when, after much preparation, and after having himself gone down the Indus and paved the way by bribing, soothing, or bullying the petty chiefs, and either preventing their uniting in the defence of Mūltān, or causing them to join in its attack, he again set himself down before it, and after a sharp, though not very long defence, he gained possession of the ancient city of Mūltān, slaying the governor, Nawāb Muzāffar Khān, and several of his sons in the breach.

A fanatic *Akāli* is said to have been the main instrument in the capture; mad with opium, he threw himself into the breach, and, followed by a forlorn hope of the like material, cut his way through the astonished and degenerate Moslems, who had of late years adopted the absurd attempt at relieving themselves from their Sikh enemies by buying them off, instead of expending the same money in entertaining troops and strengthening their defences. So much quicker was the Māharājah in this instance than was

expected, that, while the neighbouring chiefs of Monkera and Bāhāwālpūr were concerting to aid the city, he took it, having actually in his camp a small contingent of the *Dāudpūtras* whose hearts were with their Mūsalmān brethren in the town; in like manner, the *Pathāns* of Kasūr, lately brought beneath the yoke, were obliged to lend their unwilling aid to subject another *Pathān* state.

The plunder of Mūltān was great, and reported greater; and such was now the Māharājah's power that he ventured to rob his soldiers of their acquired booty. The only other instance of such an act on record is that of Nādir Shāh, which, at the time, nearly cost him his life, and perhaps did so eventually; but for Runjīt Singh, in the face of the system of Sikh brotherhood to laugh not only at the rule of every man being entitled to his *patti*,[1] but actually to take from the troops the hard cash in their possession, was doing what none but a very bold man dared to do, at such a time and with such a people.

Mūltān paved the way for the conquest of Peshāwar and Kāshmīr, both of which provinces

[1] Equality among the Surdārs was, as has been stated, a fundamental law of Sikh policy, and was observed, much as other laws enacting equality have ever been.

fell by the same arts that conquered the Punjāb. In 1823, for the last time the Sikhs and Afghāns met in a pitched battle at Noushera, where Runjīt Singh's personal bravery and that of his *Akālis* (whom he freely expended in such engagements) chiefly conduced to the success of the day. The tide of conquest had already been turned backwards, and this was the last attempt of any consequence made by the Afghān crown, or rather chiefs, for there had been so many kings and so many aspirants for power that the energies of the nation were expended in its own destruction.

In 1827, Syud Ahmed's religious war had disturbed the *durbār;* and the fanatic, having obtained a footing in the Yusufzye country, and being warmly supported by the wild and warlike tribes of that strong region, alarmed Runjīt Singh much; but, about the time I went to Kāngrā, the Syud was slain, and his followers dispersed by a force under Kunwar Sher Singh, who thereby gained great credit at court and some éclat with the army. The Syud had actually acquired possession of Peshāwar, and chiefly lost the good-will of his supporters by over-strictness as to religious ceremonies, as well as by touching their pockets to aid his military enterprises.

I have thus faintly sketched the Sikh progress up to the time I joined the ranks of its army, and have thereby shewn that, contrary to the general supposition, there has been but little fighting in the Punjāb for many years; that most of the acquisitions were gained by diplomacy, that the Sikh valour can scarcely be said to have been yet tried, and that to hold their own they will have to put forth more manhood than they have yet been required to do. I have already, in a former chapter, stated the strength and condition of the army when I joined, at which time the revenue that came into the public treasury was a crore and a half yearly, nearly as much being the portion of the *Surdārs* and proceeds of their *Jāgīrs*.[1]

But I may have tried my reader's patience too much, by entrapping him into disquisitions which, however, as he is not obliged to read, he has no reason to complain of; and now I will

[1] Faint as is the outline here given, much of it is taken from Princep's Narrative, the contents of which I have reason to believe to be correct, and also the delineations of Sikh character, as drawn by the late Captain Murray. The only credit, therefore, I aspire to is for clearly condensing the information collected by that officer, which in very few instances needs to be corrected by after-inquirers: indeed, were all the British agents as diligent and desirous after the truth as he was, India would be a well known country.

return to Kot Kāngrā, even though I have other matters to write of; but a frightful catastrophe that at this time took place, almost under my eyes, demands notice in the first instance.

Chānd Khān and his late jailer were in open arrest under the care of Aliverdi Khān; unless to come to myself, they had no permission to leave the Mūltānī lines. Breathless with haste and terror, Aliverdi Khān rushed into my presence, the morning after my last conversation with Chānd Khān, exclaiming "*Sāhib*, he's dead!"

"Who is dead, man?"

"Chānd Khān, *Sāhib!*"

"Chānd Khān!" echoed I—"tell me how and when? poor fellow! and is he really dead?"

Pulling on my upper garment, I rushed out with the Mūltānī, and on entering the enclosed area, one of the outside rooms of which had been occupied by Chānd Khān, I found my faithful follower lying on the ground weltering in his blood; his head was nearly severed from his body; there was also a deep gash in his side, and two of his fingers were hanging from the right hand suspended by the mere skin. By a cut on the *chārpaī* on which the unfortunate man had lain, it appeared he had been attacked when asleep, and by the wounds on

his fingers he must have attempted defence, seized the sword, and tried to wrest it from his murderer's hands.

With a heavy heart I returned home, after having made all possible inquiries to enable me to get a clue to the actors in the bloody deed. Three persons appeared to have been engaged, and to have performed their work leisurely and coolly; the old Sikh jailer was missing, and, of course, all attributed the act to him, but I could not bring myself to suspect him, so open and candid had been his deportment, and so little of the assassin was there in his countenance. I would not, therefore, go with the crowd, but rather believed he had been spared, and carried off to make it appear that he had struck the blow.

The most extraordinary part of the question was, how such a deed could have been performed in the midst of my camp, and in the very lines of my best troops; it made me feel keenly how critically I was placed, and how precarious was my own life. "Poor fellow!" thought I, "would I had never set foot on this accursed land, that teems with villanies and whose inhabitants think nought of life. Chānd Khān has fallen in my service, a victim to his fidelity: he may have been not all purity, but

he was true to his salt. Under better circumstances, and taught in a different school, he might have been a good man, as I believe him to have been a brave one. Peace to his ashes! Be it my duty to trace to the death his murderers; and, whether in high or in low place, to visit his blood on their heads."

The report was soon abroad, and from Lāhor strange versions of the affair came, that I had murdered my *Vaqīl* to prevent disclosures, and to get rid of an instrument who knew too much of my schemes; but what was said and done at Kāngrā and elsewhere must be told in another chapter.

CHAPTER X.

The plot thickens.

Chānd Khān's death came on me so suddenly, amidst so many troubles, that I was quite bewildered; his Mūltānī squad were, I saw, by no means satisfied with the part I had taken in regard to their leader, on his return from Lāhor; and, as was natural for rude minds, could not understand how I should treat a servant whom I trusted and liked, as I had acted towards Chānd Khān; nor could they forget that their friend was a prisoner when he met his death.

I could appreciate the men's feelings, and, therefore, regarded not their glances, but exerted myself as if I had been their comrade, to trace out the villains. A sword and a shoe had been left behind; both were common coarse articles made by village workmen, and it was my great object to find the manufacturers. All

my endeavours, however, failed, and it was long before the truth was revealed, and another depth of Sikh character fathomed.

How much I now missed my *Vaqīl!* His careless, easy manner, so unlike any other native of my acquaintance, had drawn me towards him; for, whatever may have been the value of his harangues and opinions, they had an earnestness and a devil-may-careishness about them, that was very attractive to one like myself, who had long dwelt among men measuring their words, and watching the listener's eye to judge of the effect of the first sentence, before a second should be permitted to issue from their lips; who could never give an answer without considering why the question was put, and if it meant "more than met the ear." Mūsalmān, Hindū, and Sikh, almost all of my acquaintances during my not long but very busy career, having been of such stamp, I could not but appreciate Chānd Khān, and in his company felt as if with a European intimate. To replace such a man was no easy matter, and seldom was a bold and wise counsellor more needed than just now at Kāngrā; for without were enemies thickening, and within, friends and followers were wavering.

Taking Aliverdi Khān aside one day, I re-

marked to him, as if casually, that he and his comrades appeared to be tired of my service; that if so, the road was open; they should have a free passage to their homes, be paid up to the last farthing, and receive certificates of conduct.

"Has your *fidwi*[1] given offence? is my lord displeased?" was the reply.

"By no means, Aliverdi; I do not usually disguise my thoughts, nor do I offer *chits*,[2] when I have reason to complain of my servants; the case is as I've stated; you seem to have something at your hearts, and I would not be served by unwilling hands."

"*Khodāwand*, shall your *fidwi* speak?"

"By all means, friend, speak out."

"My lord is angry, and distrusts his servants, but believe me, *Sāhib*, we would die for you; true it is that we are grieved at the dog's death that our brave and open-hearted friend and *Surdār* has met. We are down-hearted on his account; and, pardon me, my lord, we think that, considering his zeal and his services, Chānd Khān was but ill rewarded."

Aliverdi was a favourite, and one who had

[1] Servant, dependant.

[2] More properly *chittī*, a letter, but here applied to a certificate of good conduct.

not presumed on the partiality shewn him; I therefore explained to him how impossible it was I could have acted differently towards the unfortunate deceased. "But no man," repeated I, "more laments his death, or will go further to avenge it."

"And so I have said, my lord," rejoined the *Pathān;* "there are odd fellows among us, and some of them are wilful and suspicious; but I've reminded them how you have treated us from the beginning, and how you have exerted yourself since Chānd Khān's death." The result of this conversation was an alteration in the demeanour of my men, whom I now found doubly alert, and anxious to wipe away from my memory this temporary suspicion.

At this time I received a *parwānah* to the effect that I was to produce Chānd Khān at Lāhor, dead or alive; that, failing to do so, I should be made personally responsible. "Short and sweet," exclaimed I; "they are coming to it in earnest now; they'll have me out of Kāngrā; but the Māharājah must come himself, for he'll find that he has one obedient servant; one officer who respects his orders."

How I came to be Governor of Kāngrā often puzzled me, and how I, a stranger and a foreigner, was trusted as supreme in so strong

a hold, when the system of the government was to suspect all its servants, and in the pettiest forts to put more than one in authority, or sometimes as many as three or four *thānaddārs* to watch and check each other. The conclusion I came to was an unusual one for the Punjāb, that, having been much favoured, I was bound to be very honest!

My position, in all its bearings, I explained to Māhtāb Kowr; she advised, nay, conjured me to fly, but I could not take such a step without subjecting myself to suspicion, and giving a triumph to my enemies. I, however, converted the little money I had amassed, being about two thousand pounds sterling, into gold, and bills on *Shroffs* in the British territory, and I always carried about my person £500 worth of gold, in ducats and in thin plates. In my travels through many countries I had been accustomed thus to load myself, by secreting my cash about my person, generally in a belt round my waist; but, in times of danger, in more unsuspected places. Just now I could not but feel that every day might be my last at Kāngrā, and indeed, with so much to contend against, I should have yielded to the storm had not my pride forbidden, and had I not had a dearer object than self to care for.

Marriage is thought by some to incapacitate a man for the duty of a soldier,[1] and to deteriorate him for all active business. My own experience contradicts the opinion: an active man will be active, and a sluggard slothful, be he either benedict or bachelor; nor would any woman, worthy of the name of wife, think of interfering with what regards the credit of her husband, unless to urge him onward, to cheer him by her counsel on departure and in absence, and to brighten his home to him on his return; such is the part of that wife whose husband makes her the partner of his heart, of his cares, and his joys.

The young and innocent mind of Māhtāb was fast maturing: my visits to herself and mother, though still unfrequent, were employed in directing her attention to such studies as would unfold her understanding, and gradually enable her to see the puerility of the religion of her country, and prepare her for the reception of Christian truths; she had already the best pre-

[1] Bellasis challenges high authorities when he advocates marriage for a soldier; among others, the highest military authority living. But the Duke advocated bullocks for artillery! So who is infallible? After all, "*wife*" conveys very different ideas to different minds. Doubtless, Bellasis means a wife as she ought to be; and he may safely appeal to facts whether such a one has ever been a hinderance to her husband's success.

paration, in a teachable spirit, a loving and a confiding disposition; and what will not woman believe, when taught by the man she loves?

Many attempts had been lately made to draw me into contumacy. Not only, as I have said, were those about me desirous to do so, but, as before hinted, my neighbours, the hill chiefs and Rājahs, induced by the fame of my repulse of Sachet Singh, desired my alliance, some to shake off the Sikh yoke, others to avoid its expected approach; but I steadily, though civilly, declined all such offers, and said, that if again made, I should be obliged to refer the propositions to Lāhor.

Kāngrā was wanted as a position: it was therefore less myself than my stronghold, that the confederates were anxious to obtain; and, failing to induce me to join the league, a scheme was set on foot to surprise my fortress.

I had for some time been in possession of vague and indefinite reports as to their intentions; but, giving them no credit, I was too incautious; when one evening that I had retired earlier than usual, who should steal quietly into my chamber but Gulābī, before I was well asleep. She soon roused me into perfect attention, by her more than usually wild and energetic manner.

"*Sāhib*," said she, "lie still, but listen; it is no ordinary news that has induced your *loundī* to intrude on your privacy. I'm but this moment returned from the mountain side, where, accidentally, I overheard a conversation that made my very hair stand on end; it was thus, my lord: yesterday evening, I returned from the day's rambles, and, as usual in these my excursions, I took shelter in the shade of a friendly rock. I had scarcely eaten my solitary meal, when I was startled by the arrival of a party of three men, who took up their abode for the night within a few feet of me. One ledge of rock only separated us, and, terrified, I thought of flight, when the mention of my lord's name restrained me; I stopped, and holding my very breath with horror, I heard the details of a scheme for the surprise of Kāngrā, and the death of my benefactor. The party to whose words I was listening had just returned from Kāngrā; the men, who compared notes, appeared to have closely inspected the works, and talked of their friends within the garrison as securing to them success, and placing beyond doubt the object of their designs. Names were mentioned, but I was unable to distinguish them. Khāns, however, as well as Singhs, appear implicated: and it behoves the noble

Bellasis to be up and stirring, if he would hold his fortress."

The poor *Kunchanī* spoke so far pretty coherently, and then, in a wilder and quicker strain, continued, "Wretch that I am! what have I done? Those tones, those accents, are not new to me; they awaken a flood of memory of some distant, some happier time; but where and when I know not; no, it can be only a dream!" and she drew her hand tightly across her brow, and continued—"Who was ever kind to the poor *Kunchanī*, but Bellasis Sāhib, and the house of Kāngrā? and in requiting them both, she may now die contented."

I questioned her, and perceived that there was no exaggeration or discrepancy in her report, but that the contingents of the confederates, forming a junction in a valley just without the bounds of the Kāngrā territory, were, by a long night march, to appear before my fortress before break of day on the fourth morning from the present; that false alarms of escalades were to be made on several points, and that traitors within my camp were to seize myself and some of my chief confidants, and to open the gates to the enemy.

The names of my treacherous inmates having escaped Gulābī, was unfortunate, but about some

I could not be mistaken; so dismissing her, and instantly arising, I called to my counsels my new *Naīb* and Aliverdi Khān, and told them so much of what I heard as was necessary for them to know. I then desired that Shamsher Khān, Pattāl Singh, and Hardyāl Singh, should be forthwith seized and separately confined, and that no one from any of their dwellings should be permitted, on any account, to leave the precincts of their habitations. Chains of sentinels, and videttes beyond them, were thrown out all round Kāngrā, with strict orders on no pretence to allow any individual to pass from within, and to apprehend or slay all making the attempt.

There was a defile of half a mile in length within four miles of Kāngrā, through which the confederates must pass; it was in no part fifty yards across, and so narrow in some places that, from the towering precipices on either side, parties could keep up a conversation. This defile was, as it were, the last long step in the descent from the last range of mountains into the plain; it was a branch from the valley of the river, from which it ascended gradually for a quarter of a mile; it then, for another quarter, continued to be little but a succession of precipices, the path seldom admitting of more than a single person at a time; huge rocks and boulders lay

all around, and over head still huger masses were suspended, requiring but a finger's touch to close the path entirely. Surmounting this narrow staircase, the plain and detached rock of Kāngrā lay before the bold and active intruder. Oft had I threaded "the dell of death," and, returning with my fishing-rod from the Bān Gunga, have scrambled up and over its rugged path, and turned in my mind how a score of bold hearts might there stop a host. Oh, if I can now but keep my counsel, how I will dispose of these rude mountaineers! mused I.

A party of my trustiest men I detached to lurk at the opening of the pass from the plains; they were to secrete themselves, and on no account to allow travellers or others to leave or enter the defile; but, apprehending all comers, to bring them before me.

These my plans were all arranged before day dawned, when I started with half-a-dozen followers, all of us clad as hill-men, and carrying nothing that at a distance could lead us to be taken for more than ordinary Rājpūt shepherds.

The ground, as I have said, was well known to me, but now I scanned every inch of it as if I had never been there before. The last ascent wanted but a little scarping to be made quite impassable; this, in a few hours, I caused to be

done, and selected a spot that commanded most points of the last hundred yards, where, under the shade of a huge rock, I resolved to place two large swivels. The overhanging rock formed a natural embrazure, and behind it the Juzzailmen and Tōpchis[1] could work away, almost unseen, and at any rate untouched, unless by a stray shot, while none could approach the crest of the defile without running the gauntlet of their deadly fire. At other points, on the farthest approach, I prepared similar posts, leaving paths of retreat to those most advanced, and giving orders to hurl their weapons over the precipices rather than abandon them to the enemy. These were, however, but ordinary devices, and not what I chiefly depended on; for, collecting heaps of stones along the edge of either precipice, there I left them ready to do my bidding.

My preparations were all completed the afternoon before the night on which the enemy was to approach, when, just after dark, with a beating heart, I led seven hundred picked men to my ambuscade. Each individual or small party had his or their orders; strict commands were given not to fire until a signal rocket was detached, and then there was to be no rushing out and no

[1] From top, a gun, artillerymen.

hurrying, no chance-blazing, but each marksman was to aim at his man when within sure distance; there was to be no shouting, no talking; silence, with quick and steady firing, was to be the order of the night.

The moon was near its full, and would favour us till within an hour of daylight. Anxiously I watched, my thoughts being, in spite of myself, more at Kāngrā than on my present undertaking, and I could not but picture to myself danger in the quarter where my treasure lay, where was the one creature that was dear to me.

One watch of the night remained, when I was roused from my reveries by the notice that the enemy's advanced guard approached. They hurried along, noiselessly and confidently, without any apparent thought of an enemy, or without deeming it necessary to crown the heights. There was laughter and loose talk among their ranks, jokes were passed as to what might and would happen at Kāngrā, estimates of the prize to be gained, the booty hoarded in my cellars, and the strong boxes of the *Māhajuns*;[1] all this was divided and allotted within my hearing; as, from the point where the defile left the river, I accompanied the onward progress of the advance.

[1] Merchant, money-dealer.

Hanging over them, often within pistol-shot, I waited until the leading file had gained all but the last ascent, and had but a few paces more to reach the scarped step at top, to gain which, though it had been undefended, would have required a bold and active pull, even for a mountaineer.

I had closely watched their progress, and at this moment gave the signal, when up shot into the air a rocket; on the instant echoed from rock to rock peal after peal of musketry, and the crash of rocks mingled with the agonized cry of hundreds closed in the *cul-de-sac*, not knowing which way to turn, or whither to fly; for their whole force of eight thousand men having entered the defile, a small party of my men had closed in on them from the rear, and, according to orders, had spread out and kept up a heavy fire to conceal their weakness. Advance in front, or ascent of the rocks on either flank, was impossible under such circumstances; distracted, therefore, and rushing headlong one against the other, trampling over the dying and the dead, the miserables in front endeavoured to force their way backward. All the impression I had desired was now made; my object was not butchery; I therefore recalled my men from the rear, and,

opening out the gorge to the enemy, relaxed my fire from above.

With difficulty I could obtain a hearing, and make known to the terrified hill-men that they might now depart unmolested; but when the voice of my herald reached their ears, I at last persuaded the leaders or their *Vaqīls* to parley with me above, while their troops, as a pledge against treachery, kept their present ground below.

Humiliated to the dust, the Rājahs, Chiefs, and others of less note approached; I spoke kindly and encouragingly to them, told them I knew they were deceived and misled, and that all I now wanted from them was a pledge against further molestation. Delighted at my moderation, they poured out torrents of praise, and each and all swore to be my friends unto death.

Shortly after daylight all arrangements were made, and by mid-day we parted, leaving detachments to look to the dying and the dead. Before I left, I perceived Gulābī in the wildest part of the pass, and amidst such a scene of horror there moved she along, scanning each face of the dead, as if searching for one she fully expected to find.

At speed I galloped home, with a strange choking at my throat, and a fulness of heart that

I could not account for: my success had been beyond my hopes, and I had struck a blow that would render my name terrible to my enemies, as well as show them that, though slow to anger, I could hit hard when aroused. Moreover, from what had now occurred, I had nothing to fear from the *durbār;* so what ailed me? Why was I sad? I knew not, but pushing on my gallant steed, I entered hastily, and almost alone, the gate of my dwelling, threw myself off the horse, and hurried to the *zanānā*. Men's faces and the general stir showed me that some event had just occurred; but I would not be stopped by the many officious dependants who met me on the way, and rather preferred to hear and see all at my own quarters.

The *zanānā* was empty, neither mother nor daughter remained, and the few affrighted servants that I found there could with difficulty make me understand what had occurred; the upshot of which was, that long before daybreak, indeed as soon I was well beyond power of hearing or seeing, the disaffected had (even in the absence of three of their Chiefs who were in confinement,) raised their banner, seized the magazine, and made attempts on the gates; but Sohan Lāl, my *Naīb*, was on the alert, and quickly overpowered the mutineers. The tidings,

however, of the rising, and of the rebels' first success, were carried to Māhtāb with all exaggerations, when she and her mother, in the terror and agony of the moment, fled by the subterranean passage; taking with them but three trusty servants, and not waiting even long enough to pack up their necessary clothing, they set off, no one could tell me whither. Distracted and foreboding ill, I sent in all directions, but evening closed, and no tidings reached me. For days and days my best and trustiest were employed, but still I could hear nothing of the party, and my worst fears became confirmed, that they had fallen in with some stray bandit party, and, their rank being ascertained, had been carried off.

My emissaries were despatched, with promises of high reward for the mere information of where the females were confined; and, half-demented at my loss, I endeavoured to pursue my ordinary avocations.

As soon as it was possible for the news to reach Lāhor, and replies from thence to arrive, I received the following letters, the tenor of which alarmed and puzzled me more by their conciliatory tone than had the former notes by their very different character. My *Vaqīl's* was a perfect specimen of its kind, showing the character of the man. After the usual flourishes, it

ran thus—"the *Sāhīb's* head is exalted, his fame overshadows that of every *Surdār;* all allow it, and no voice is raised against my master, for even the envious now see that there is no hope of injuring the noble Bellasis.

"The news, my lord, of the attempt on Kāngrā has wiped away all doubts from the Māharājah's mind; he now perceives that you were maligned, and that those with whom my lord was said to have been plotting were in reality more his enemies than those of the *Rāj.* All is now cleared, and the Māharājah only seeks to remove from my master's mind any feeling of uneasiness as to late occurrences; he has, therefore, bestowed on myself, the humblest of my lord's slaves, a *khilat* of seven pieces, and proposes, if, as usual, he should make a progress in the direction of Kāngrā, to visit my master's dwelling, and to confer every honour on him; it is even talked of in the *durbār*, that the title of Rājah with a handsome *jagīr* is to be bestowed, as is most justly his due, on the excellent *Sāhīb*, who has so gallantly defended the interests of the Māharājah."

"You are a clumsy scoundrel, friend Sukan Lāl," said I to myself, "but let me see what more you have for me;" and I resumed the

Arzi.[1]—"Even the brother Rājahs, who were so angry, are silent, or rather, being convinced of my master's worth, are now loud in his praises. As in duty bound, the faithful *Vaqīl* watches his master's interests; to represent more would be disrespectful."

I thought the fellow had been playing me false, and was now convinced of it. Having finished his *Arzi*, I took up a *pārwanāh* with the *faqīr's* seal. It applauded my valour and my skill, and desired me to continue such true and faithful service, and to comfort myself with the assurance of favour and increased honour; it concluded by desiring that a contingent from my levies should be my *hāzir* by the middle of the month, as the Māharājah intended earlier than usual to take the field, owing to the proposed interview with the Governor-General of India at Rupar.

"Your presence," the letter went on to say, "may be required, but should such honour be your lot, you will be duly informed. The Māharājah desires your welfare and honour; enough has been written." A very affectionate scrap in the old *faqīr's* handwriting accompanied the

[1] Petition; the term applied to a letter from an inferior to one above him.

above, congratulating me "on the new blossoms that were bursting forth on the tree of my fortunes."

I threw the several documents indignantly to the ground, with an exclamation of disgust at the lying and deceitful conduct of those for whom I had acted so fairly and openly. That there was a design to lull me into security, and that Sukhan Lāl had entered into the conspiracy, I had no manner of doubt, but what was the exact nature of the scheme I could not conceive.

Without giving offence, and again openly embroiling myself, I could not remove my *Vaqīl*, but I replied to his *Arzi* cautiously and briefly, saying, that the Māharājah judged rightly when he looked on me as one of his faithful servants; while to Azīzūdīn I wrote, that "the flowers of loyalty on the tree of fidelity would only give place to the fruit of more perfect devotion."

I must now return to "the dell of death," where I left Gulābī prying among the dead, as some demented being, scarce conscious of her own vitality, or of the terrible scene around her. Thus, she was reported to have continued searching during the day, and to have been especially curious in examining the dresses of a party of

Rājpūts from the neighbourhood of Kulu,[1] who, to a man, were cut off in the night's conflict. She turned each corpse over and over, examined each feature, and then with a wild cry passed on to another; till at length she came to the body of a man considerably past the middle age, but still in the ranks of the soldier; and who, by the scars on his brow, and the deep gashes on his breast and shoulder, appeared on the late rencontre to have well done the soldier's part, and to have been one of those who gained the extreme point of the defile, and met my men hand to hand. He was attired just as his fellows, but his arms were of better make, and in addition to his matchlock and *talwār* he wore a silver-hilted dagger, or rather knife, in his girdle.

When Gulābī approached his corpse, it was lying with the face to the ground, having been apparently hurled from the crest of the defile as he led on his band; the *Kunchanī*, therefore, commencing her researches from the other direction, came to it the last. Her strength was great, and enabled her to raise the body and turn the

[1] This is a hill state, situated to the North-west of the British station of Simlah, and lying along the Sutlej; wild and inaccessible, the pinnacles studded with forts, and the country inhabited by a bold and active race, little inclined to submit to any yoke.

face upward, when, uttering a piercing shriek, she fell to the ground. Gulābī was well known and much liked by all; many crowded to help the harmless, and, as was thought, half-witted creature, and in their rude way to restore her. When she opened her eyes, and they again fell upon the corpse before her, she exclaimed, "Take him away, I've murdered him!" and then, recovering herself, she said more quietly, "I have killed my brother, and destroyed my father's house; a doomed wretch I have ever been; life to me has long been a burthen; this day shall close my miserable career!"

All this was mystery to her hearers; but they gathered from her that, by their dress, she had discovered her clansfolk; and by a mark above his right eyebrow, she had discovered the body before her to be that of her brother, whom she had supposed to have been slain in her defence thirty years before, but who, we afterwards ascertained, was only wounded on the occasion on which his sister had been carried away. Why the poor creature attributed her brother's death to herself, I alone knew, and I was the more shocked at the sequel to the tragedy, for, partially recovering, and none heeding her threat of self-destruction, she was allowed to climb the highest cliff of the defile, from whence, to the

horror of all, she threw herself headlong, thus terminating her unhappy career, and in her own deluded creed opening to herself a door of pardon for the unintentional guilt of her life.

The terrible end of Gulābī was a severe blow to me; I was saved from a sight of this last tragic scene, but a narration of its circumstances was quickly brought, and it aggravated the wound just caused by the mysterious disappearance of Māhtāb and Chanda Kowr.

GULABI'S DIRGE.

"Alas, for the spring, that too quickly went by!
Alas, for the summer, with storm-shrouded sky!
Alas, for the autumn, that brought no repose!
Alas, for the winter, of heart-withering woes!
Alas, for the tree with such promising root,
That, engrafted on sin, brought forth poisonous fruit!
Alas, for the light, that was kindled in heaven,
But by crime's cursed blast into darkness was driven.
Woe, woe to the spoiler, the cruel, the strong,
Who, for villanous sport, did such tyrannous wrong!
His own sky shall darken, his own root decay,
And the murderer's offspring shall Destiny slay!"[1]

[1] Referring to the death of Gulāb Singh's son, Udam Singh, who was killed in the remarkable catastrophe which placed Sher Singh on the throne. Few in India can have forgotten that, on the death of Runjīt, in June, 1839, he was succeeded by his son Kharak Singh, a man utterly un-

fitted for the position, and who was wholly in subjection to his own son, Nāo Nihāl Singh. In the end of 1840, the poor cipher of a Māharājah died, whether fairly or not is not known: the court went out to the funeral solemnities, and the ambitious prince was in all the glory of his new title, when the train re-entered the city of Lāhor. There was a narrow gateway, the crowd was great, and made a rush to seize the money, scattered on such occasions among the populace. The elephant on which Nāo Nihāl was seated was pushed close to the wall, the building gave way, a beam fell and killed both the new Māharājah and Udam Singh, who was seated on the same elephant.

END OF VOL. I.

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